GEORG BÜCHNER'S LEONCE UND LENA: A BAKHTINIAN READING OF THE CARNIVALESQUE, SOCIO-POLITICAL DIMENSION OF THE CHARACTER OF VALERIO

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis assesses the socio-cultural dimensions of the character of Valerio in Georg Büchner's Restoration drama Leonce und Lena. The extent to which Leonce und Lena is consistent with the socio-cultural critique in Büchner's other works has been a point of contention in Büchner scholarship. The Bakhtinian theory of the carnivalesque and carnivalized literature provides us with a theoretical apparatus that not only can assess the humorous aspects of Leonce und Lena but also how this very comical work of literature relates to the socio-political context within which Büchner wrote and lived. In order to achieve this dialogue between text and context (both the socio-cultural-historical and the theoretical) this thesis traces the Bakhtinian theory of the carnivalesque and carnivalized literature and how these notions relate to Büchner's understanding of literature and the character of Valerio. In addition the implications of a carnivalesque reading of the character of Valerio are discussed.

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Part I

INTRODUCTION

Through the character of Valerio, Georg Büchner articulates a carnivalesque, socio-cultural critique in his Restoration drama Leonce und Lena (HA).[1] Valerio enacts a carnivalesque strategy primarily as a means of survival and is successful in this respect, in that he evades detection and capture by the police apparatus in the kingdom of Popo. As a seemingly illogical by-product of this evasive strategy, he appears to obtain a position as Minister of State at Leonce's court. The fact that the character of Valerio is depicted as self-consciously resorting to playing the role of the fool in order to survive functions as a critique of the conditions portrayed in the kingdom of Popo. Valerio cannot find an adequate role for himself in society even though he is purported to be of "sound reason." The critique functioning through Valerio is limited in its scope. It exposes the limitations of the available roles in Reich Popo,

[1]For the sake of clarity, all references to Leonce und Lena will be to Lehman's Hamburger Ausgabe (HA), unless otherwise noted.

but it does not offer us a realistic alternative to this depicted world.

The emancipatory potential of the carnival--that is, its "turning the world upside down"--has long been recognized, but so has carnival's inability to directly bring about societal change.[2] It is generally agreed that carnival is a time of liberation from the constraints that normally bind people in their daily lives. Carnival suspends the quotidian social constraints and institutes the carnival (dis)order of things. Within the spatio-temporal bounds of carnival a broad license is given to its participants, and it is within these bounds that we can find various forms of socio-cultural critique. It is in this respect that carnival has a liberatory and critical effect. But carnival does not extend its liberatory effect beyond the bounds of the carnival season. The carnival license only extends to carnival's spatio-temporal boundaries. To attempt to venture beyond these bounds exposes one to the strictures governing everyday life.

One possible means of extending the carnival license beyond its spatial and temporal limitations is to incorporate carnival's images into the realm of literature. This incorporation of carnival's images into literature produces

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[2]For a discussion of the critical function of carnival see Bakhtin (Rabelais), Bristol, and Burke.

what Michael Bakhtin calls carnivalized literature (Dostoevsky 107). Carnivalized literature incorporates many elements of carnival, and its function is similar to that of carnival. But the process of assimilating carnival's elements into literature changes the nature of these elements and their relation to reality. The assimilated carnivalesque images function in the realm of literature and not directly in everyday life. Though the assimilated carnival images do maintain their ties to quotidian life, these ties are mediated through the literary work in which the elements function. The process of assimilating carnival images into literature extends the bounds of carnival's influence on culture beyond the spatio-temporal confines of the popular cultural manifestation of carnival, but it also changes the relationship between the assimilated carnival images and the world in which those images function. The assimilated carnival images function thereafter within the realm of literature and are subject to the limitations governing the scope and function of literature.

Büchner argues that literature's effect on society is highly mediated: it cannot directly change society, it can only serve to challenge the reader and confront her/him with the contradictions and complex problems existing within society (HA 2: 455; letter 54). Because literature--like carnival--can present an alternative order of things and perhaps contribute to a changed understanding of the current state of affairs it can have a mediated effect on the socio-

political order. That is, if literature can articulate a reality which problematizes the reader's understanding of her/his society and, in the case of carnivalized literature, undermines established hierarchical orders, then literature can indirectly affect the real world, in that human beings act on the basis of their understanding of the world.

In this thesis I argue that the character of Valerio in Leonce und Lena can be analyzed with categories established in Bakhtin's conception of carnivalized literature. This type of analyses results in a reading of the character of Valerio's dramatic effect in terms of a carnivalesque, socio-cultural, critical discourse. Considering Leonce und Lena to be part of the body of carnivalized literature can aid in addressing many points of dispute in Büchner research. More specifically, an understanding of the characteristics and socio-cultural function of carnival and carnivalized literature provides insight into a tradition of critique that has deep cultural roots. Because this critique is of a non-polemical nature, it is often overlooked or dismissed. Bakhtin seeks to correct this misperception of carnival's socio-cultural effects through a discussion of carnival's characters and themes and the function that these characters and themes fulfill in society and culture. If we consider Leonce und Lena to be carnivalized literature, and if we accept Bakhtin's articulation of the socio-cultural function of carnival and carnivalized literature, then we can say that Leonce und Lena operates as "engaged" literature through the

mechanism of Valerio's carnivalesque strategy. In order to better understand how the carnivalesque strategy of Valerio's character operates, it is necessary to more clearly outline the nature and function of carnival in the realm of literature.

The second part of this thesis begins with a working definition of carnival (II.A) and an outline of significant images of carnival (II.A.1). Carnival's function is described in broad socio-cultural terms (II.A.2) as are the limits of carnival's's socio-cultural function (II.A.3). After tracing the general socio-cultural characteristics of carnival, I discuss carnival's relevance to literature. In particular, the outlines of the definition (II.B), characteristics (II.B.1), and history (II.B.2) of carnivalized literature are traced. In order to establish the link between the cultural manifestation of carnival and the assimilation of this cultural manifestation into literature, I discuss the process of carnivalization (II.B.3), its implications for literature and culture (II.B.4), and the limitations of this type of literature. In concluding my discussion of carnival and literature I establish the link between Büchner and carnivalized literature by discussing Büchner's own statements on literature, the critical reception of Büchner, and how this relates to what I have outlined as the characteristics and function of carnival and carnivalized literature. Finally, in part three of this thesis I focus specifically on Leonce

und Lena. After a brief summary of the drama (III.A), my discussion of Valerio is first situated in relation to the critical reception of this character (III.B). I then proceed with a descriptive analysis of the character of Valerio, in which I analyze Valerio's position in the drama (III.C), and the carnivalesque strategies employed by this character.(III.C.1-2). In order to clarify the implications of a Bakhtinian reading of Leonce und Lena the function and limitations of the character of Valerio in light of his carnivalesque characteristics (III.C & B) are discussed. In concluding this thesis I broaden its scope and discuss the relevance of a Bakhtinian reading of Leonce und Lena and carnivalized literature.

Part II

CARNIVAL AND LITERATURE

Bakhtin argues that carnival has exercised a tremendous genre-shaping influence on Western literature (Dostoevsky 123). He states that carnival is expressed in a symbolic language that cannot be translated into abstract logical categories, but that it is amenable to a "transposition" into artistic, literary images (122). The result of this transposition is the carnivalization of literature. In this section I will offer working definitions of carnival and of carnivalized literature, concentrating on those aspects that are relevant to my analysis of Leonce und Lena. I will then discuss carnival in its relation to literature and outline the process whereby carnival images are transposed into literature, thus articulating the genre of "carnivalized literature."[3]

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[3]For detailed argumentation on this topic one should consider the works of Bakhtin (Rabelais; Dialogic; Dostoevsky; Speech Genres), Bristol, Burke, and Richards. Bristol's work on Shakespearean theater and carnival is particularly important and interesting in relation to this thesis, because my argument is similar to the argument presented in his text.

A. Carnival

Bakhtin defines carnival as "the sum total of all diverse festivities, rituals and forms of a carnival type" (Dostoevsky 122).[4] Carnival is a syncretic, ritualistic pageantry that assimilates various cultural rituals and juxtaposes them within the unity of the carnival festival (Bakhtin, Dostoevsky 122). According to Bakhtin carnival is not a fixed form, but rather is a changing, hybrid mixture of various traditions which are adapted to the time and place of the particular manifestation of carnival (Rabelais 218). This broad definition of carnival is therefore not limited to any particular local or historical manifestation of carnival. Carnival unites various realms of culture through the festive play and intermixing of the images from various cultural traditions. The essential function of this intermixing is to bring elements of culture together into a form of cultural expression that provide a "traditional" reading of these various forms, thus making these realms understandable in a language of popular culture.

The essential feature of the festivities, rituals, and forms that makes them of a carnival type is their function in

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[4]The main sources providing my background knowledge regarding the characteristics and function of carnival are Bakhtin (Dialogic, Dostoevsky, and Rabelias) and Burke 178-243.

popular merriment (Bakhtin, Rabelais 218). In this thesis I will use Bakhtin's notion of the "carnivalesque" to refer to the carnival-type characteristic that serves as the defining feature of the various carnival festivals, rituals and forms. According to Bakhtin, we should understand the term "carnivalesque" in the broad sense of the word. That is, "carnivalesque" is understood "not only as carnival per se in its limited form but also as the varied popular-festive life of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance; all the peculiarities of this life have been preserved in carnival, while the other forms have deteriorated and vanished" (Rabelais 218).

Bakhtin considers the popular cultural tradition of carnival important to our understanding of Western culture because of its function as the "people's second life" (Rabelais 8). The images of carnival provide a means of expression for "unofficial culture." Unofficial culture encompasses all of those aspects of culture that are neglected or rejected by the official understandings of cultural life (i.e., official church or state doctrines). According to Bakhtin, unofficial culture is expressed in the images of the public square and the language of the marketplace (Rabelais 154). That is, the images we see are not those of official, "polite" culture and "civil" society, but rather those of festive, plebeian culture and of "uncivilized" society. The language of carnival is the familiar language of the street. In carnival we find the curses and billingsgate of the everyday language of the

peasants, not the philosophical or literary utterances of an educated elite. According to Bakhtin, carnival exercised a crucial role in the cultural life of the people up until the middle of the seventeenth century (Dostoevsky 131). After this time carnival's influence on the cultural life of people became increasingly indirect and unrecognizable.[5]

To approach Bakhtin's understanding of carnival, it is necessary to discuss carnival in terms of the images that were recurring features of carnival. This approach to carnival is important in that:

> carnival has worked out an entire language of symbolic concretely sensuous forms--from large and complex mass actions to individual carnivalistic gestures. This language, in a differentiated and and even (as in any language) articulate way, gave expression to a unified (but complex) carnival sense of the world, permeating all its forms. This language cannot be translated in any full or adequate way into a verbal language, and much less into a language of abstract concepts, but it is amenable to a certain transposition into a language of artistic images that has something in common with its concretely sensuous nature; that is, it can be transposed into the language of literature. (Dostoevsky 122)

In the context of this thesis, I am working on the understanding that carnival is a fact of human cultural experience. Carnival and its images are rooted deep in human cultural experience and exist prior to any conscious attempt to understand their meaning and function. Bakhtin vehemently denies that we can understand carnival in terms of abstract

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[5]For a concurring opinion see Burke, 207-243.

logic or even in terms of our language. That is, we should not expect our attempts to articulate and understand carnival in terms of our "national" language(s) to be able to capture the "essence" of carnival, nor should we assume that the "language" of carnival will conform to our attempts to "translate" it into another language. As Bakhtin argues:

> Carnivalistic thought also lives in the realm of ultimate questions, but it gives them no abstractly philosophical or religiously dogmatic resolution; it plays them out in the concretely sensuous form of carnivalistic acts and images. Thus carnivalization made possible the transfer of ultimate questions from the abstractly philosophical sphere, through a carnival sense of the world, to the concretely sensuous plane of images and events--which are, in keeping with the spirit of carnival, dynamic, diverse and vivid. (Dostoevsky 134)

Carnival cannot be isolated from the concrete actions, utterances, and events in which it finds its expression. Though carnival is wrestling with many of the same questions being addressed by philosophy and religion (i.e., "ultimate questions"), carnival addresses these questions in terms of a popular cultural tradition and uses the language of that same tradition. With this in mind, I will assess carnival in terms of the images and gestures that populated the carnival landscape, focussing specifically on those images which are most relevant to this thesis. I will attempt to explore the characteristics and function of these images as they relate to their cultural context. I believe this approach is compatible with Bakhtin's understanding of carnival and will

prove insightful in our understanding of Valerio's meaning and function in Leonce und Lena.

1. Images of Carnival

According to Bakhtin, carnivalesque images are ambivalent (Dostoevsky 125-126, 166). There is an ambivalent mixture of negative and positive, or destructive and constructive elements in carnivalesque images. The images are not one-sided or finalized, the boundaries are not strictly drawn. In fact, it is a defining feature of these images that they transgress boundaries and undermine any finalized understanding of things (Bakhtin, Dostoevsky 165).

Carnival images are functional and not substantive, the primary function being: undermining prematurely finalized systems of thought by exposing their limitations, and; providing the basis upon which a new way of seeing things can be founded. With this in mind, I will elaborate certain elements of carnival images with an eye to their function, which will be discussed in part II.A.1 of this thesis.

a) Carnivalesque inversion. The definitive image of carnival is the world turned upside down. That is, carnival is a time of transgressed boundaries and disrupted order. The serious official order of everyday life is suspended in favor of the carnival world (dis)order. In the carnival world (dis)order portrays the weak as being the powerful, the subversive as the normal, the normal as the abnormal. In

short, the lines of definition are treated as blurred or suspended in favor of multiplicitous and fractious images; all images are destabilized; no images are maintained in an orderly, univocal manner.

It is important to note that inverted carnivalesque images are not simply the reversal of the orthodox images: in carnival we see a play with traditional images, but these images are not dealt with in a monological fashion. The images mocked in carnival are not simply portrayed in an absolutely positive or negative light. Carnivalesque negation does not obliterate the negated object, thus relegating it to nothingness. Carnivalesque negation exposes what has been denied expression. Inverted carnival images confront us with the cultural "other" through their symbolic embodiment of the "logic of the wrong side out," that may be seen in "gestures and other movements: to walk backward, to ride a horse facing its tail, to stand on one's head, to show one's backside" (Bakhtin, Rabelais 410).

b) Carnival King and Queen. The primary carnivalistic act is said to be the mock crowning and subsequent decrowning of the carnival king and queen, and the related naming of the Abbot of Misrule (Bakhtin, Dostoevsky 124). The mock crowning is thoroughly ambivalent, in that the decrowning is already understood to be implicated by the very act of crowning: the reign of the carnival king and queen cannot last. The crowning and uncrowning mark the beginning and

termination of carnival respectively: carnival begins with the coronation and carnival ends with the uncrowning.

While the carnival nobility rule, they instantiate the rule of carnival. They declare the serious, official order of things to be suspended in favor of the carnival (dis)order of things. They may perform mock ceremonies, which may be more or less directly representative of a real world noble person whom the people dislike. Thus there may by parodical elements to the reign of the carnival king.

c) Lent. The lenten figure always serves as a backdrop to carnival. The image of Lent symbolizes the end of carnival and the return to the official, serious order. Lent is the opposite of carnival. Official seriousness and the official hierarchical relations are reinstated. After carnival we must not only return to the status quo, but we must pay for our excesses with deprivation of all epicurean aspects of life. Whereas carnival celebrates the body and seeks to provide and satiate all of the body's needs and desires, the image of Lent disclaims the importance of the body in favor of the spiritual aspects of human existence. Bodily desires are to be disciplined or punished. Food and drink are lacking or absent. Images of Lent emphasize the spiritual aspects of human existence at the expense of the material. Strict hierarchical relations are maintained.

d) The Rogue, the clown, and the fool. The rogue, the clown, and the fool are staple figures of carnival. Central to the role of the rogue is:

> ...the right not to understand, the right to confuse, to tease, to hyperbolize life; the right to parody others while talking, the right to not be taken literally, not 'to be oneself;' the right to live a life in the chronotope of the entr'acte, the chronotope of the theatrical space, the right to act life as a comedy and to treat others as actors, the right to rip off masks, the right to rage at others with a primeval (almost cultic) rage--and finally, the right to betray to the public a personal life, down to its most private and prurient little secrets. (Bakhtin, Dialogic 163).

These rights of the rogue are granted in response to the limitations of the real world. According to Bakhtin the above mentioned rights of the masks result from the "struggle against conventions, and against the inadequacy of all available life-slots to fit an authentic human being" (Dialogic 163). The carnival fool is essentially playing a role in response to the lack of opportunities presented to her/him in real life, when s/he is her/his "real" self.

According to Bakhtin, the rogues are not what they seem to be; their being exists in their roles--"outside their roles they [the rogues] do not exist"(Dialogic 159). The rogue is a "reflection of some other's mode of existence...(her/his) entire being is on the surface" (Dialogic 160). The rogue is the ultimate dissimulator: s/he operates within culture on the basis of her/his (dis)guise, refusing to accept the roles available to him in her/his culture. In the process of this dissimulation the rogue is

able to expose the nature of the various roles s/he portrays as masks, and in this exposure of the available social roles, the rogue exposes the limitations of her/his society.

Bakhtin argues that the jokester is characterized by a "profound distrust of human discourse as such" (Dialogic 401). Furthermore, the jokester's philosophy of discourse is characterized by a "radical skepticism," that results in a strategy of "gay deception." That is, because speech cannot be trusted, or taken at face value, it does not pay to operate on the basis of trust and truth in discourse. Rather, especially when one is in a position lacking in power, it pays to reveal only what we must, thereby maintaining room for maneuver. Bakhtin states that this gay deception is justified in the sense that it is directed precisely at "liars." If one lies to those who are essentially liars then one cannot be faulted for this lying. Bakhtin states:

> Opposed to the language of priests and monks, kings and seigneurs, knights and wealthy urban types, scholars and jurists--to the languages of all who hold power and who are well set up in life--there is the language of the merry rogue, wherever necessary parodically re-processing any pathos but always in such a way as to rob it of its power to harm, "distance it from the mouth" as it were, by means of a smile or a deception, mock its falsity and thus turn what was a lie into gay deception. Falsehood is illuminated by ironic consciousness and in the mouth of the happy rogue parodies itself. (401-402)

In effect what we see in gay deception is a disruption of everything, including the criticism leveled by the rogue. The rogue her/himself undermines her/his critique by

admitting to its falseness. But yet there remains the exposure initiated by this critique. The fact that the rogue has uttered this critique has brought something out in to the open, as it were. The fact that the rogue then undermines it mitigates the univocal nature of this critique, thereby relieving it of any official seriousness; but the fact remains that the rogue has pointed up something, and this exposure cannot fully be undone. There is no possibility of complete reversal. The utterance has been made. What we do see is a sort of backpedaling on the part of the rogue. S/he must be careful not to take too firm a position, as this would expose her/him to the possibility of censure at the hand of the powers that be. Thus we see this carnivalesque destabiliztion in the identity of the rogue. The rogue undermines the full force of her/his critique by showing how silly and false it too can be. It is as if the rogue were saying, "it was only a joke," but the fact that s/he said what s/he said cannot be fully undone. It may be undermined, and that is what s/he does, but it is an event that cannot be completely undone.

e) Masks. Related to the images of the rogue, clown and fool, is the trope of the mask. The mask symbolizes disguised identity. Masks allow the rogue to alternate guises, permit her/him to avoid delimitation to an established, stable identity, and supply the rogue with an

almost unlimited freedom of movement, as mentioned above. According to Bakhtin the mask:

> is connected with the joy of change and reincarnation, with gay relativity and with the merry negation of uniformity and similarity; it rejects conformity to oneself. The mask is related to transition, metamorphoses, the violation of natural boundaries, to mockery and familiar nicknames. It contains the playful elements of life; it is based on a peculiar interrelation of reality and image, characteristic of the most ancient rituals and spectacles...It reveals the essence of the grotesque. (Rabelais 39f)

We can see the mask operating as a facilitating device in service of the carnival participants. The carnival mask serves to suspend the original, everyday identity of the person who wears is. In effect, the mask functions as a bridging device that allows the wearer to move from image to image without worrying about how to get there. The act of wearing a mask indicates that the wearer is playing the role signified by the respective mask.

f) "Lower bodily stratum." In carnival we see the prevalence of what Bakhtin calls the "material bodily lower stratum." That is, carnival provides a culture for the human body, especially in its vital bodily functions, eating, drinking, and sex. The body of carnival is the grotesque human body, that emphasizes:

> that which protrudes from the body, all that seeks to go out beyond the body's confines. Special attention is given to the shoots and branches, to all that prolongs the body and links it to other bodies or to the world outside...to those parts of the grotesque body in which it outgrows its own self, transgressing its own body, in which it

> conceives a new, second body: the bowels, and the phallus...next to the bowels and the genital organs is the mouth, through which enters the world to be swallowed up. And next is the anus. All these convexities and orifices have a common characteristic; it is within them that the confines between bodies and between the body and the world are overcome: there is an interchange and an interorientation...Thus the artistic logic of the grotesque image ignores the closed, smooth, and impenetrable surface of the body and retains only its excrescences (sprouts, buds) and orifices, only that which leads beyond the body's limited space or into the body's depths. (Bakhtin, Rabelais 316f)

According to Bakhtin, we see this grotesque bodily imagery dominating the image of the body in carnival. Grotesque images predominate whenever people laugh and curse in a familiar environment. These grotesque bodily images provide the basis for familiar and abusive gesticulations, which dominate not only carnival but also our daily life (319).

The grotesque body is sharply contrasted to the classical body. The classical body is seen as closed off and finished; the classical body is considered aesthetically beautiful. The border between the classical body and the world is sharply maintained. There are no grotesque protrusions: the nose is not overly big, the belly does not protrude, the genitals are in proportion the the rest of the body, and so on. The erotic nature of the body becomes privatized and controlled. Eating is maintained within the norms of proper cultural edicts. The body is civilized. The child is potty trained.

g) Gestures. Gestures are a common feature of carnival, especially abusive or other "unofficial" gestures. Gestures such as pointing at the nose, spreading the legs out wide and various exaggerated facial gestures are common. These gestures have a common basis in popular culture, and are rooted in bodily imagery. Eccentric and inappropriate gestures abound in carnival, that is, gestures that are freed from the strictures of non-carnival life (Bakhtin, Dostoevsky 123).

h) Mock ceremonies. Mock ceremonies of various sorts, including mock weddings and hangings in effigy are common carnival tropes. The official ceremony is mocked and the officials are often parodied. The mock ceremonies are essentially a means of appropriating the imagery of the official ceremonies and re-accentuating, or re-interpreting them into the terms consistent with folk culture. It is a way to comment on certain officials whom the people may dislike or wish to censure for unacceptable behavior. Mocking is a way to comment on the mocked ceremony in terms consistent with the popular culture. The form of the mocked ceremony is used because the people do not possess the abstract conceptual terminology to articulate this commentary in any other form. By mocking the ceremony and reaccentuating it the message can be conveyed through the double-voiced debasing of the ceremony.

i) Land of Cockaigne. Cockaigne is the kingdom of the carnival nobility: here carnival rules. Cockaigne is a carnivalesque utopia. Food, drink, and sex are (super)abundant. All the epicurean wants of the people are provided for in excess. All seriousness is mocked. Work is outlawed.

The land of Cockaigne, or the land of eternal carnival, is a common trope in carnival. In Cockaigne the carnival king would never be uncrowned. The rules of the official hierarchical order would be permanently inverted. Even the natural and physical "laws" of the universe would be set out of action, permanently suspended in favor of the permanent summer of carnival and festival time. The official seriousness of the official religions would be suspended in favor of a carnivalesque version of religion; food would be permanently abundant; work would be outlawed; fun and parties would be the order of the day, year round. Carnival time would rule, rather than the official time of clocks and calendars. Time would be measured in a carnivalesque fashion, perhaps in accordance with the sun or the flowers.

j) Laughter. Carnival laughter is seen as related to the more general phenomenon of ritualized laughter. Ritual laughter is always directed at something higher (Bakhtin, Dostoevsky 126). The elements of ridicule and rejoicing are always intermixed in ritual laughter. That which violates the traditions of a society is ridiculed and mocked. In that

the transgressive is mocked and ridiculed, the traditions are celebrated and buttressed. Thus, ritual laughter has a conservative element. Carnivalistic laughter functions in much the same manner. It is directed at something higher. That which transgresses the traditional values is mocked and ridiculed. In this mocking, the traditional norms are affirmed.

According to Bakhtin, carnival laughter functions to overcome the "cosmic fear" of the people (Rabelais 335). That is, carnival laughter is directed at that which is powerful and potentially overwhelming. The immeasurable forces of the world are addressed with a degrading laughter, thus bringing these forces down to earth. What can be laughed at cannot be so fearful. Carnival provides the folk with an opportunity to laugh at that which usually is experienced as oppressive and dominating. This aspect will be crucial to our understanding of Valerio's character, as I will be arguing below that Valerio's instantiation of the carnivalesque is his response to the oppressive forces which have brought him to his "läufiger Lebenslauf.".

Bakhtin argues that the serious, official orders (i.e., the Church and the State) tend to use cosmic fear to control and oppress people (Rabelais 335). They do this by enhancing this fear and warning of the possibilities for the feared catastrophe if certain norms are not adhered to. For example, defenders of the unequal distribution of wealth within the State may warn of utter chaos and economic

breakdown if the current distribution of wealth and the motivational factors arising from this distribution of wealth are not maintained. This type of argument may be used against more equitably distributing wealth and power in a society, playing on the public's fear of an utter breakdown of social order and economic structure.

2. Functions of Carnival

As stated above, carnival is "functional and not substantive...; it absolutizes nothing, but rather proclaims the joyful relativity of everything" (Bakhtin, Dostoevsky 125). The function of carnival is to provide a forum to work out an understanding of worldly events in a manner that is directly related to the lives of the participants. Carnival is the unofficial form and forum for the expression of those aspects of human life that are not given voice in the official cannon of cultural expression. Carnival is a genre of popular culture. According to Bakhtin, carnival functions

> to consecrate inventive freedom, to permit the combination of a variety of different elements and their rapprochement, to liberate from the prevailing point of view of the world, from conventions and established truths, from clichés, from all that is humdrum and universally accepted. This carnival spirit offers the chance to have a new outlook on the world, to realize the relative nature of all that exists, and to enter a completely new order of things. (Rabelais 34)

The above cited passage points out carnival's ambivalent function: firstly, carnival functions to debase and destroy firmly established, finalized systems of thought; and

secondly, carnival creates the possibility for a new understanding of the world, free from the limiting and limited vision of the destroyed systems of thought. Thus carnival has a destructive and a productive function. Carnival functions destructively in that it undermines finalized understandings of things by exposing the limitations of those understandings and the inability of those understandings to account for all aspects of existence. Carnival functions productively in that it brings together aspects of existence which were formerly kept separate, and it brings to light aspects which were virtually ignored in the debased understanding; in this way, carnival provides the ground for a new way of seeing the world. But carnival remains ambivalent; it does not offer a new, finalized understanding of things. Carnival is a process of destruction and rebirth, but the definition of the reborn understanding is not provided by carnival; this definition will have to be worked out elsewhere. If the process of carnival is not totally suppressed, we should expect this definition, if and when it is worked out and finalized, to be "attacked" and mocked by carnival. The process never ends. Those who seek a serious articulation of an alternative order within the bounds of carnival are in for certain disappointment. Carnival performs a liberatory, cleansing function. Carnivalesque laughter loosens the bonds of official seriousness, by allowing us to laugh at what binds us.

Carnival is a centrifugal force: it destabilizes and undermines firmly established, hierarchical orders. The "carnival sense of the world" is founded upon the "festival of all-annihilating and all-renewing time," which celebrates "the shift itself, the very process of replaceability" (Dostoevsky 125). Carnival shows its participants in a concrete, participatory manner that the established world order is not unchallengeable, that there are alternative ways of living in the world.

Bakhtin argues that carnival arises out of the people's distrust of "official seriousness" (Rabelais 95). That is, in response to restrictive ordering forces (e.g., the State, the Church, or certain ideologies), carnival functions to undermine order by allowing one to laugh at that order. According to Bakhtin:

> The use of the system of popular-festive images must not be understood as an exterior, mechanical method of defense against censorship, as an enforced adoption of Aesop's language. For thousands of years the people have used these festive comic images to express their criticism, their deep distrust of official truth, and their highest hopes and aspirations. Freedom was not so much an exterior right as it was the inner content of these images. It was the thousand-year-old language of fearlessness, a language with no reservations and omissions, about the world and about power. (Rabelais 269)

Carnival suspends the established order and relativizes it by enacting the carnivalesque principles of (1) free and familiar contact among the participants, (2) eccentric behavior as the norm, rather than the exception, (3) carnivalistic mésalliances, and (4) profanation (blasphemies,

debasings, obscenities, parodies, and so on) (Bakhtin Dostoevsky 123).

a) Free and familiar contact. Carnival suspends the hierarchical boundaries that exist between people and things. Carnival instantiates free and familiar contact among the participants. All of the everyday distinctions that separate people and things are suspended in favor of the playful and creative intermixing of elements from all areas of life. This is what Bakhtin refers to as "grotesque." According to Bakhtin, the grotesque operates according to its own logic. The grotesque, as it relates to the grotesque mixing of elements, proceeds according to a logic whereby

> "the images of objects succeed each other, without logic, with almost as much freedom as in a *coq-à-l'ane*, an intentionally absurd jumble of words and sentences...But having reappeared in this bizarre sequence, the object is evaluated...completely apart from its original function. This new standard invites the reader to look at the object in a different light, to measure it, so to speak, for its new use. In this process the object's form, material, and size are reconsidered. (Bakhtin, Rabelais 372)

In that familiar contact is established between people, and between people and the world, a more concrete understanding of the world is made possible. All interpretations are equally valid in the relativized carnival (dis)order of free and familiar contact.

In that every person's understanding is placed on equal footing, everyone is permitted to understand the world on her/his own terms. This is Bakhtin's understanding of true

human freedom and creativity; external, authoritative discourses, though they may have power to determine human action, are not accessible to human creativity or human agency.[6] The externally persuasive discourse is something to be obeyed, not something to be understood or questioned (Bakhtin, Speech Genres 88). Once the externally persuasive discourse is seen as relative to other discourses, its function as an authoritative discourse is lost. An authoritative discourse must exist as an absolute, self-contained authority. Once its absolutely authoritative position is questioned, its status as such is necessarily destroyed.

But, as is the case with all assimilated discourses, elements of the once authoritative discourse may live on, albeit in a familiarized form. Its former nature as an authoritative discourse may still contribute to its meaning, but this element will now be one among many interacting elements. As such it may become an internally persuasive discourse, or merely a comical element of past understanding. That is, the elements of the authoritative discourse may still function within the ideology of individuals, but if those individuals participated in the debasing of that

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[6]In this discussion of the relationship of discourse to human consciousness I am working with Bakhtin's presentation of this relationship as worked out in his Speech Genres and Other Late Essays. I am summarizing Bakhtin's presentation as I understand it, and as it is presented in Gary Saul Morson and Caryl Emerson.

discourse, they will now understand the once authoritative discourse as being relative to other discourses, even though those individuals may find this discourse still the most persuasive of all discourses. Or perhaps other individuals will understand the one-time commitment to the tenets of this discourse to be a somewhat comical error of faulty thinking, something to be laughed at and done away with, the once persuasive discourse having lost all of its power to influence and convince. The essential fact of this process is that the discourse is seen as familiarized. This is an ambivalent maneuver: the authoritative nature of the discourse has been destroyed, but in this destruction a new life for the discourse is made possible. This new life is one characterized by the discourse's being made more accessible to people and thus more human, more of the people. Thus we see the elements of death and rebirth, which are central to Bakhtin's understanding of the carnivalesque.

b) Eccentricity. In carnival, eccentric behavior is portrayed as the norm and not the exception. The strictures of everyday life are suspended, and that which would be unacceptable is now considered acceptable or even desirable. All notions of polite conduct are mocked or ignored. The more wild and unexpected the behavior the better. Entertainment is the goal; whatever pleases the carnival crowd is good; whatever restricts or limits the crowd is bad.

In that eccentric behavior is not only allowed but also expected, carnival participants experience a sense of freedom. During carnival people are allowed to live out their fantasies and to act on their desires. The creative potential of people is unleashed to the point where carnival is often seen as sanctioning violence and abusive behavior. Though the negative potential of carnival's licensing of eccentric behavior should not be ignored, it should not distract us from the basic function of this licensing. In that carnival essentially liberates people from their normal, everyday ways of doing things, there is a potential for the establishment of new ways of seeing the world. The mere fact that the carnival participant is allowed to experience this transgressive way of living may provide her/him with a new outlook on the norms that usually restrict her/his behavior.

c) Carnival mésalliances. The positive aspect of carnival is its bringing together of that which is officially held apart. In finalized systems of thought, firm boundaries are established between concepts and things. In order to define the world and to order it according to this system of thought, the world is segmented and divided. Carnival seeks to transgress these boundaries. Carnival brings things together and shows the connections between all that exists. Everything can be brought into the carnival world. Everything can be mocked. Everything can be laughed at. Philosophical ideas can be portrayed as they relate to the

human body, thus bringing ideational content into a relation with the material world. In this way, what are essentially abstract concepts are materialized, or they are at least portrayed in their implications in relation to the material world. Bakhtin discusses how Rabelais consistently brought ideas and concepts from various religious and philosophical systems of thought into the bodily sphere (Rabelais 173-177). Religious and philosophical concepts were discussed in terms of how they could be understood as applied to the human body. In doing this, Rabelais was providing a new context for both the philosophical ideas and for the human body. The mixture of these elements in this "grotesque" image provided a new way of understanding the system of thought being portrayed.

In that the carnival rogue may present a philosophical argument based on food or sex, the rogue is materializing this philosophy on the bodily level. Or in Bakhtin's terms, the rogue is decking out philosophy in the dress of the heteara (Dostoevsky 134). The rogue presents absurd applications of philosophical categories. This presentation undermines the seriousness of the philosophy under consideration, but it also makes it more concrete.

d) Profanation. Carnival portrays the usually serious and authoritative as the foolish and the absurd. Carnival portrays the sacred in profane terms. Officials and official ceremonies are mocked and parodied. In general, that which is in everyday life respected and/or feared is

laughed at, discussed in disrespectful language, or portrayed through profane, debasing images. Love may be portrayed as pure lust, the pope may be portrayed as a licentious sex fiend, the king may be mocked as an idiot or fool, and so on.

In a profaning, parodical manner carnival succeeds in sowing doubt, in undermining the authoritative by showing that it can be laughed at. In that carnival portrays these official hierarchical values in a travestied sense, carnival strips these images of their authority, bringing them down to earth, or undermining them to the point where they exist on the same plane with everything else, the plane of carnival.

As with carnival in general, the profanation of authoritative images is ambivalent. When a religious image is profaned in carnival there is a sense that certain aspects of this image are being "brought down to earth," or secularized. But the image itself is not totally destroyed; it is reborn with the possibility of being endowed with a revitalized understanding in the minds of the carnival participants.

3. Limitations of Carnival

Though Bakhtin recognizes the emancipatory potential of carnival he reminds us that carnival does not itself institute a change in the institutions of society. That is, as a ritualistic cultural form, carnival does not guarantee socio-political change. Carnival may evidence to its participants the possibility of an alternative way of seeing

things, in that during carnival the participants are actually living this possibility, but carnival does not establish this alternative order in concrete institutional terms. Carnival articulates this alternative order within the bounds of the established order. To the extent that carnival is a public manifestation, it will have to contend with the strictures of the established order.

The carnival sense of the world is said to be "hostile to any conclusive conclusions; all endings are merely new beginnings" (Dostoevsky 165). Thus, if one is looking to carnival for firm, conclusive statements, one is unlikely to find them in the carnival images themselves. One may "switch registers" and begin a political discourse outside or about the carnivalesque images, but then one is no longer operating within the carnivalized view of the world. The statements about the carnivalized images will be problematic, due to the inherent ambivalence of the carnivalesque images. Thus, though carnival may undermine authority, it does not lend itself well to the construction of a new institutional order. Any attempt construct this new order may in turn be subjected to carnivalesque debasing, thus beginning the subversive process all over again. In fact this is what Bakhtin hopes for. He argues that seriousness is not altogether impossible, but that what is needed is a seriousness which is not incapable of laughing at itself (Rabelais 274). That is, a seriousness which realizes its relatedness to its cultural and historical position and does not try to eternalize

itself. A socio-cultural order that is informed of its limitations would be a socio-cultural order that is in dialogue with other cultures, with the sub-cultures existing within it, and with the past and anticipated historical epoches.

B. Carnivalized Literature

In order to establish the linkage between carnival and the character of Valerio, it is necessary to account for the influence of the cultural tradition of carnival in the realm of literature. What follows is an account of the transposition of the images of carnival into literature. The characteristics of carnivalized literature and the history and the process of the transposition of carnival's images into literature are traced. The effects this transposition has on literature are discussed. In the conclusion of this section the effect that this transposition into literature has on carnival's transposed images and on literature will be assessed. Finally, I will briefly outline the socio-cultural function and limitations of carnivalized literature, as this issue is of importance to our discussion Leonce und Lena's location in Büchner's work. More specifically, an understanding of the socio-cultural function and limitations of carnivalized literature aids in our understanding of Leonce und Lena's relationship to works of Büchner that are more explicitly critical of society.

1. Characteristics of Carnivalized Literature

According to Bakhtin, carnivalized literature is literature that was "influenced--directly and without mediation, or indirectly, through a series of intermediate links--by one or another variant of carnivalistic folklore (ancient or medieval)" (Dostoevsky 107). That is, carnivalized literature is a genre that has assimilated elements of folk culture of a carnival type and therefore a genre in which carnivalesque images function. It is those images discussed above that function within the body of carnivalized literature and give carnivalized literature its characteristic features.

Carnivalized literature is multi-styled and hetero-voiced (Bakhtin, Dostoevsky 107); it assists in destroying barriers between genres, between self-enclosed systems of thought, between various styles, and between all attempts at abstract isolation of the various realms of culture (137). Carnivalized literature achieves this destruction by bringing various realms of culture, such as religion, philosophy, literature, sex, food, alcohol, festivals, and so on, into direct contact with one another. Carnivalized literature displays an anti-classical mixing of images that results in what Bakhtin calls "grotesque realism" (Rabelais 34).

2. History of Carnivalized Literature

In regard to the history of carnivalized literature, Bakhtin argues that:

> the influence of carnival, in the broadest sense of this word, was great during all periods of literary development. However, this influence was in most cases hidden, indirect, and difficult to detect...The Renaissance is, so to speak, a direct "carnivalization" of human consciousness, philosophy, and literature. (Rabelais 273)

The essential feature in the historical linkage between carnival and literature is that at various times in the history of literature, the immediacy of carnival's influence on literature has varied. As Bakhtin sees it, the direct influence of carnival on literature peaked in the Renaissance. Both before and after this period, carnival's influence was less pronounced and much more mediated. For example, following the Renaissance we see a process in which we proceed from a time of carnival's direct influence on literature toward a situation where carnival's influence becomes an interliterary phenomenon. In the case of later stages of development, carnivalized literature is seen to have lost its direct ties to the folk-cultural manifestation of carnival, receiving its carnivalesque aspects instead from other literature of a carnival type.

Important literary manifestations in the descent of carnivalized literature are the Socratic dialogues, Attic Comedy, Menippean satire, much of Renaissance literature (especially the works of Rabelais, Shakespeare, and

Cervantes), and the commedia dell'arte.[7] The essential point of this line of descent is that carnivalesque elements can be seen in all of these works. Beginning with the Socratic dialogues, Bakhtin traces elements of carnivalized literature which run through the Attic comedies and the Menippean satire into Renaissance literature and continue up until present day literature (Dostoevsky 105-67).

In Bakhtinian terms, carnivalized literature developed from a situation where the complex, secondary genre of literature was directly assimilating and reworking the primary genre of carnival images to a situation where the literature began assimilating the carnivalesque elements from other literary genres, thus breaking the direct ties to popular culture (for further elaboration on Bakhtin's notion of genres see below). When this happens, the secondary genre of literature loses the vitalizing impulses provided by the primary genres and its ties to the everyday world. In such a situation literature tends to become a manifestation of an elitist circle, neither speaking to the lives of average people, nor relating to them in terms that they can understand. While it may be correct to ignore the broad cultural ties and implications of the classical literature of the "Idealdichter" (see below), it is a major mistake to

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[7]For Bakhtin's discussion of the history of carnivalized literature see Dostoevsky 105-67, and Rabelais 34-42, 149-154, 273-288, 420-462.

ignore these ties in the case of the authors writing with an eye to popular culture. If we want to investigate the cultural ties of literature, then we must have a method for investigating these ties. In the case of carnivalized literature, we can look to Bakhtin's tracing of the process of carnivalization for clues as to how we can understand and approach such literature.

3. Process of Carnivalization

Carnivalization is a process of assimilating heterogeneous, typified patterns of utterance (genres) into the literary work. Within the boundaries of the literary work the heterogeneous genres are brought into contact with one another, and they begin to mutually inform each other in their dialogue about the order of things. That is, the various incorporated and assimilated genres found in carnivalized literature are brought into dialogue on the basis of their existing in the unity of the literary work. Even if those genres are usually kept distinct from one another in the official order of things, the fact that they are articulated in the unity of the carnivalized literary work necessarily brings them into dialogical contact with one another. This contact is dialogical in that carnivalization prohibits the hierarchical ordering of ordinary speech genres to continue to rule the interaction; carnivalization equalizes the playing field upon which these speech genres are interacting.

Carnivalized literature's assimilation of an unlimited amount of material from popular culture and the intermixing of these elements on the same plane of artistic articulation creates new artistic hybrids. That is, in Bakhtinian terms, the free and creative assimilation of heterogeneous speech genres into an artistic work brings about an unlimited dialogue among the many voices that speak through these assimilated genres (Speech Genres 114). Because carnivalized literature does not allow for a finalized hierarchical ordering of these assimilated genres, the various genres are allowed to interact with one another on an equal basis, each genre articulating its understanding of the world in its own language. That is, because all voices are allowed to speak on an equalized discursive field, competing for the listening ear of the carnival participants or the carnival king, the usual hierarchical ordering of the various discourse modes in society is suspended.

Bakhtin's notion of speech genres is important to our discussion. As stated above, the heterogeneous mixing of genres is characteristic of carnivalized literature. It is precisely this free mixing of genres and the violation of any attempt to maintain a strict hierarchical generic order that brings about the carnivalesque effect. In order to better understand the relationship of Bakhtin's notion of genres to literature and the function of genres in culture, we need to trace Bakhtin's understanding of genres. Bakhtin defines a speech genre as follows:

> A speech genre is not a form of language, but a typical form of utterance; as such the genre also includes a certain typical kind of expression that inheres in it. In the genre the word acquires a particular typical expression. Genres correspond to typical situations of speech communication, typical themes, and, consequently, also to particular contacts between the meanings of words and actual concrete reality under certain typical circumstances. (Speech Genres 87)

Bakhtin goes on to remind us that speech genres are "relatively stable types of utterances" that are boundless, "because the various possibilities of human activity are inexhaustible, and because each sphere of activity contains an entire repertoire of speech genres that differentiate and grow as the particular sphere develops and becomes more complex" (Speech Genres 60). Essentially we are talking about ways of thinking of, of speaking of, and of expressing our understanding of the world. These typical forms of utterance shape what we can say about the world and how we can say it. Not only does a particular vocabulary accompany certain situations, but a certain form of expression also accompanies each particular realm within which the utterance is made. For example, among friends and family we use a different vocabulary than when we are speaking to colleagues in our academic fields. Scientific discourse is different from that of literary discourse. A deconstructionist speaks in a different genre that does a purveyor of New Criticism. If one becomes familiar with the various speech genres prevalent in contemporary discourse, one begins to "hear voices" in the speech of the people

speaking in these speech genres. We will recognize that the person speaking is speaking in this genre and that the person is following the genre's traditional pattern of argumentation, focusing on particular aspects of reality that are characteristic of this genre's interests, and using the genre's typical vocabulary to articulate her/his argument.

There are two main types of speech genres, primary and secondary. Primary genres are considered to be "unmediated speech communion" (Bakhtin, Speech Genres 62). Examples of primary genres are "rejoinders in a dialogue, everyday stories, letters, diaries, minutes, and so forth" (98). Bakhtin is not very explicit in his definition of primary speech genres. Essentially they are utterances that are directly related to the immediate concerns in the real world and that are learned in conjunction with the learning of our native language.

The relationship between primary and secondary speech genres is crucial to our understanding of the process of carnivalization. Bakhtin outlines the relationship between primary and secondary genres as follows:

> Secondary (complex) speech genres--novels, dramas, all kinds of scientific research, major genres of commentary, and so forth--arise in more complex and comparatively highly developed and organized cultural communication (primarily written) that is artistic, scientific, sociopolitical, and so on. During the process of their formation, they absorb and digest various primary (simple) genres that have taken form in unmediated speech communion. These primary genres are altered and assume a special character when they enter into complex

> ones. They lose their immediate relation to actual reality and to the real utterances of others....They enter into actual reality only via the novel as a whole, that is, as a literary-artistic event and not as everyday life. (Speech Genres 62)

According to Bakhtin, literature, which is a complex (secondary) genre, is formed through the assimilation and absorption of simple (primary) genres. The assimilation of the primary genres alters the character of the primary genre by bringing it into contact with other assimilated genres within the unity of the literary work as utterance. The assimilated primary genres function in the world only within the literary work and not directly in everyday life. But it is essential to remember that the primary genre's ties to the real world are not totally sundered. The primary genre maintains intertextual ties to the extraliterary world, thus bringing extraliterary elements into the literary work. This extraliterary effect can have an expanding, vitalizing affect on literature.

In describing the process of revitalizing literature by means of assimilation of primary genres, Bakhtin states:

> When dealing with the corresponding extraliterary strata of the national language, one inevitably also deals with the speech genres through which these strata are manifested. In the majority of cases, these are various types of conversational-dialogical genres. Hence the more or less distinct dialogization of secondary genres, the weakening of their monological composition, the new sense of the listener as a partner-interlocutor, new forms of finalization of the whole, and so forth... The transfer of style from one genre to another not only alters the way a style sounds, under

> conditions of a genre unnatural to it, but also violates or renews the given genre. (Speech Genres 66)

The effect of assimilating familiar speech genres has the effect of promoting an "unofficial, volitional approach to reality." This type of approach to reality assists in the "destruction of traditional official styles and world views that had faded and become conventional" (Bakhtin, Speech Genres 97). According to Bakhtin, this familiarization of styles opens "literature up to layers of language that had previously been under speech constraint" (97). Thus, in anti-normative forms of literature, this process of assimilating primary genres proves useful in developing non-canonical modes of expression.

4. Functions of Carnivalized Literature

Carnivalization is a "flexible form of artistic visualization" which makes possible" the discovery of new and as yet unseen things" (Bakhtin, Dostoevsky 166). This new vision is made possible in that carnivalization breaks people and their actions as well as ideas "out of their self-enclosed hierarchical nesting places," and brings them into the "familiar contact of unlimited dialogue" (Dostoevsky 167). In that carnivalization brings things into familiar contact with other things and with the person trying to understand these things, carnivalization can make that which was merely an externally persuasive discourse internally persuasive. That is, in that carnivalization involves using

images and stylistic devices that were common to a widespread folk-cultural phenomenon, those who are familiar with this genre will be more likely to understand the message than if the genre is unfamiliar to them. Instead of having to rely on external sources for the interpretation of this message, the recipient can work out her/his own understanding "internally."

The primary characteristic of carnivalized literature is that it makes use of genres from popular culture within the realm of literature. According to Bakhtin, in carnivalized literature, carnival becomes a "means for comprehending life in art" (Dostoevsky 131). In using easily recognized cultural images and forms of expression, the author's work is more immediately accessible to the reader. The function and meaning of the characters portrayed in literature are more readily understood by the readers if the function of the characters is similar to what the reader has encountered on a regular basis in the popular culture. One of the functions of carnivalized literature most relevant to our study is its ability to "deck out philosophy in the motley dress of a heteara" (Bakhtin, Dostoevsky 134). As I will argue below, Valerio is constantly embodying various philosophies (or ideologies) in a carnivalized form. In doing so he is relativizing these philosophies by exposing their limitations and revealing the absurdities of some of their assertions. As Bakhtin states, in the history of European literature carnivalized literature

> Assisted in the destruction of all barriers between genres, between self-enclosed systems of thought, between various styles, etc.; it destroyed any attempt on the part of genres and styles to isolate themselves or ignore one another; it brought closer what was distant and united what had been sundered. (134)

This assimilation of popular images is considered by Bakhtin to be a productive and enriching process for literature. In that literature assimilates popular images into its works it is able to retain some of the sense of these images while at the same time changing them by bringing them into a new context. The effect of this process of assimilation is a literature which is bound to the cultural forms of the people and is thus more directly relevant to them. In this way literature has a more accessible meaning for the reading public, rather that an obscure meaning relevant only to those with a high degree of education.

In the case of Rabelais, perhaps the penultimate carnivalesque author we see carnivalization, where

> all historical limits are, as it were, destroyed and swept away by laughter. The field remains open to human nature, to a free unfolding of all the possibilities inherent in man. In this respect Rabelais' world is diametrically opposed to the limited locale of the tiny idyllic world. Rabelais develops the authentic expanses of the folkloric world on a new base. Nothing fetters Rabelais' imagination, nothing within the given boundaries of the spatial and temporal world can confine him or restrict the authentic potentialities of man's nature. All limitations are bequeathed to the dying world, now in the process of being laughed out of existence. All representatives of the old world--monks, religious fanatics, feudal lords and royal courtiers, kings (Picrochole, Anarch), judges, pedants and others--are treated as absurd and doomed. They are completely limited beings,

> their potential is utterly exhausted by their pitiful reality. (Bakhtin, Dialogic 240)

The aspect of carnivalization that is particularly relevant to our understanding of Leonce und Lena is how carnivalization may be used as a technique to portray the pathetic nature of the existing order and to indicate the existence of human potentials--in the character of the rogue--that are not being realized in this suffocating and limiting order of things.

5. Limitations of Carnivalized Literature

The limitations of carnivalized literature are similar to those of carnival, but even more so due to the fact that carnivalized literature conveys carnival in a once-removed form. Bakhtin argues that after the seventeenth century carnival entered literature mostly indirectly. Where in the work of Rabelais the influence of carnival is seen as direct and unmediated, in the work of later artists carnival enters their works via other literature. That is, carnival is not influencing literature directly but rather in a mediated form through the literary tradition of carnivalized literature. As such, carnival is not immediately recognized as a force in this literature, and the implications of carnival as a cultural genre are not fully implicated in our understanding of it. Carnivalized literature became another literary tradition among many and was considered on aesthetic and

literary terms rather than in terms of its socio-cultural implications.

In this light, we can consider Büchner's opinions about the function and limitations of literature in general and his prognostications for the role of an engaged literature in society. It is well known that Büchner did not think that the world can be changed through literature or through ideas alone. What then did Büchner claim the function of literature was, and how do his utterances regarding literature relate to our understanding of Leonce und Lena?

C. Büchner and Carnivalized Literature

Why all of this discussion of carnival and carnivalized literature? As mentioned above, this thesis argues that Leonce und Lena functions within the body of carnivalized literature. Considering Leonce und Lena as an example of carnivalized literature goes to the heart of the debate about the socio-political dimensions of the drama and the question as to how Leonce und Lena is to be understood in light of Büchner's other writings. Many critics (Mosler; Wawrzyn; von Jancke; Poschmann) see a condemnation of the social system portrayed in the drama. Other critics (Benn; Vietor; Schröder) consider Leonce und Lena to be fundamentally apolitical. This disagreement as to the political dimension of Leonce und Lena is instructive. If Leonce und Lena is devoid of any socio-political dimensions, it is difficult to understand how Büchner, who was very active politically,

could write such a work. If we argue that Leonce und Lena is apolitical then we must account for how this can be so in relation to Büchner's activities and other writings of the same period, which were vehemently critical of society or directed at changing society (e.g., Der Hessische Landbote, Dantons Tod, Woyzeck, Lenz, and many of his letters to friends and family [HA 1 & 2]). On the other hand, if we claim that Leonce und Lena has a critical dimension we must be able to locate this critical discourse and the means through which it is carried out by the drama. This has proven problematic due to the nonsensical nature of Büchner's *Lustspiel*.

Some critics locate Büchner within the tradition of "grotesque" comedy or the commedia dell'arte. Other critics have traced the intertextual connections of Leonce und Lena back to their possible sources and have located Büchner in the same body of literature considered by Bakhtin to be "carnivalized literature." By linking Büchner's statements about literature and the type of source material used in Leonce und Lena to Bakhtin's theory of carnivalized literature, I will show that Büchner's understanding of the nature and function of literature and the characteristics of Leonce und Lena are consistent with the nature and function of carnivalized literature.

According to Büchner, the function of literature is to challenge the reader with an unapologetic articulation of characters existing within society and not to elaborate a

political manifesto or a socio-cultural program.[8] He argues that by articulating the characters in his dramas in a realistic manner he can achieve historically real accounts of human existence and allow his readers to experience and participate in this reality through their reading. It is not for the author to moralize about the figures in his works, but rather it is the reader's responsibility to understand what is occurring in the drama and then to apply this knowledge to what is occurring in her/his world. In this sense, Büchner does see his work as didactic; the reader is responsible for drawing the lesson to be learned. In other words, Büchner does not consider the role of the author to be that of providing moralizing lessons. The author's role is to portray historically real figures who speak in their own voice and not to limit the portrayal of those characters by subordinating it to the intentions of an ordering, authorial voice. In Bakhtin's terms, Büchner wants to fully develop each character's voice. That is, he wants to portray the character speaking in her/his own voice as s/he would in the real world, articulating her/his own understanding of the world in her/his own words.

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[8]Büchner did not articulate an aesthetic theory per se, but he did comment on literature in his letters to friends and family, and in Lenz we can discern some of his positions on aesthetics as articulated by the character of Lenz in that text.

Since the author does not "stand over" her/his characters and does not limit the characters to her/his didactic intentions, this type of literature is open-ended and somewhat ambiguous. If we are looking for well worked out argumentation that leads to a firm, univocal conclusion we will not find it. What we will find is an articulation of many voices speaking on similar topics, focusing on similar themes from different points of view. In the case of Leonce und Lena, instead of allowing each character to fully articulate her/his point of view on the world, and in this sense achieving a positive portrayal of the characters' ideologies, we see an undermining of all serious points of view. All characters are made to look foolish. All characters are to be laughed at. We see limited beings who are all portrayed in a parodical light.

1. Engaged Literature? Ruckhäberle argues that Büchner attempts to portray the possibility of achieving a momentary emancipatory break through the comic portrayal of conditions in the Kingdom of Popo and how the characters act in relation to this world. He points out the subversive nature of Büchner's humor and resists the notion that merely because the emancipatory moment is not carried out into a full-blown emancipation of the characters Büchner was not writing engaged literature (140). Ruckhäberle is responding to the claims of the critics who argue that Leonce und Lena does not function critically and is merely an example of a "non-

engaged" comedy, written in order to meet the requirements of the Cotta competition (see Benn). Voss agrees with Ruckhäberle and points to recent developments in Büchner research that seek to understand Leonce und Lena in terms of its position in the body of Arcadian literature. Voss traces the intertextual connections of Leonce und Lena and argues that one does not need to resort to a reading of Leonce und Lena in the tradition of absurd theater to conclude that Leonce und Lena functions as critical drama (282). In order to assess this notion as to whether Leonce und Lena functions in a critical manner we need to understand more about how Büchner himself views the function of literature. In particular, we need to assess how Büchner understands literature, and how this understanding relates to what we have been calling carnivalized literature.

In a letter to Gutzkow written in 1836 from Straßburg, Büchner argues that literature, through its vivid articulation of characters acting in the world, can affect how we understand the world, and in turn how we act in the world (HA 2: 455). If the characters are depicted in a manner that strives for a complete and realistic portrayal of the character type, up to and including the ideology that accompanies this type of character, then the reader is supplied with the material to evaluate this type of character. Because the character's understanding of her/his world is presented through the character's actions, and through what the character says, and what is said about the

character the reader is provided with the material to make judgements about the depicted mode of being-in-the-world depicted in and through the character. According to Büchner, through the accurate and precise articulation of historically real characters literature can make it possible for the reader to learn what is going on around her/him in the world.

In general, Büchner is sceptical that a direct and openly confrontational approach is the best means to bring about change in his socio-historical context. After the debacle of the Hessische Landbote (HA 2: 33-61), Büchner writes his family:

> Der Geburtstag des Königs ging sehr still vorüber, Niemand fragt nach dergleichen, selbst die Republikaber sind ruhig; sie wollen keine Emeuten mehr, aber ihre Grundsätze finden von Tag zu Tag, namentlich bei der jungen Generation mehr Anhang, und so wird wohl die Regierung nach und nach, ohne gewaltsame Umwälzung von selbst zusammenfallen. (HA 2: 439)

Büchner appears to have resigned himself to the notion that the Republicans were gaining influence with the younger generation, and that the regime would in time self-destruct or decay . On this same topic, he writes his family about his bitterness, anger, frustration, and disgust with the authorities for having searched his room for evidence pertaining to the Hessische Landbote (letter from 8-8-1834, HA 2: 431-32). Büchner argues that the authorities had absolutely no evidence that he had anything to do with the pamphlet, but nonetheless they ransacked his room. He

surmises they did this merely because he is not pathetic enough in his appearance and actions. Büchner responded to this violation of his rights by going to the university Magistrate, where he had "mittelst des höflichsten Spottes (den Universitätsrichter) fast ums Leben gebracht" (HA 2: 431. Büchner tells his family that he took revenge for this "Verletzen meiner heiligsten Rechte" by confronting the Magistrate "kaltblütig mit der größten Höflichkeit" and with "beißender Ironie" (HA 2: 432). What we see here is Büchner's grasp of the situation he is confronted with and what he understands his strategies for confronting this situation to be. He sums up this situation at the end of this same letter, when he states:

> Sollte man, sowie man ohne die gesetzlich nothwendige Ursache meine Papiere durchsuchte, mich auch ohne dieselbe festnehmen, in Gottes Namen! ich kann so wenig darüber hinaus, und es ist dies so wenig meine Schuld, als wenn eine Heerde Banditen mich anhielte, plünderte oder mordete. Es ist Gewalt, der man sich fügen muß, wenn man nicht stark genug ist, ihr zu widerstehen: aus der Schwäche kann Einem kein Vorwurf gemacht werden.... (HA 2: 432)

He argues that one cannot be reproached for being weak and resigned in the face of superior forces. One would be stupid to take on superior forces directly. When one is much weaker than one's opponents--as Büchner and other social critics were--it is smarter to employ subversive tactics that allow one to avoid taking a firm stand if one is confronted by the authorities.

If we consider Büchner's understanding of the function of literature as a mediated didactic discourse and his understanding of the dangers associated with direct confrontation of the authorities, it is reasonable to expect that Büchner would be attracted to more subtle means of attack on the order of things. Given Büchner's own use of transgressive, parodical and debasing techniques, and his defense of his employment of these techniques, it is sensible to conclude that Büchner considered this "carnivalesque" method of opposition to be a acceptable and fruitful means of writing, given his situation.

2. Grotesque Realism. Related to Büchner's didactic pupose of portraying "characters acting in the world" is his interest in the "realistic" style of writing he associates with J.M.R.Lenz and Shakespeare. In this regard Büchner says the following about his dramas: "Ich betrachte mein Drama wie ein geschichtliches Gemälde, das seinem Original gleichen muß" (HA 2: 438). Büchner relates his desire to remain true to history and claims to portray the figures as they actually are or were. Again, in relation to Dantons Tod (HA 1), Büchner states:

> der dramatische Dichter ist in meinen Augen nichts, als ein Geschichtsschreiber, steht aber über Letzterem dadurch, daß er uns die Geschichte zum zweiten Mal erschafft und uns gleich unmittelbar, statt eine trockne Erzählung zu geben, in das Leben einer Zeit hinein versetzt, uns statt Charakteristiken Charaktere, und statt Beschreibungen Gestalten gibt. Seine höchste Aufgabe ist, der Geschichte, wie sie sich wirklich

> begeben, so nahe als möglich zu kommen. Sein Buch darf weder sittlicher noch unsittlicher sein, als die Geschichte selbst; aber die Geschichte ist vom lieben Herrgott nicht zu einer Lectüre für junge Frauenzimmer geschaffen worden, und da ist es mir auch nicht übel zu nehmen, wenn mein Drama ebensowenig dazu geeignet ist...Der Dichter ist kein Lehrer der Moral, er erfindet und schafft Gestalten, er macht vergangene Zeiten wieder aufleben, und die Leute mögen dann daraus lernen, so gut, wie aus dem Studium der Geschichte und der Beobachtung dessen, was im menschlichen Leben um sie herum vorgeht...Was noch die sogenannten Idealdichter anbetrifft, so finde ich, daß sie fast nichts als Marionetten mit himmelblauen Nasen und affectirtem Pathos, aber nicht Menschen von Fleisch und Blut gegeben haben, deren Leid und Freude mich mitempfinden macht. (HA 2: 445-446) (See HA 2: 451-2)

In Bakhtinian terms, Büchner is a "grotesque realist." He seeks to portray humans in all aspects of their being. If that portrayal is "grotesque," or "unseemly," and not "beautiful," so be it. The character in her/his "flesh and blood" must be related; if that means portraying the seamier side of life in order to articulate an accurate picture of the characters as they actually existed in real life, so be it. In order to really reach the reader and to awaken empathy for the characters, so that the reader may possibly learn something of the world of the characters, this "grotesque" realism is necessary. To portray an idealized picture of reality is useless if one wants to reach the reader and make it possible for the reader to learn something about her/his world through the reading of literature.

Related to Büchner's statements about this "realistic" style of writing is Büchner's sense that he needs to find a way to articulate his works in a manner that satisfactorily

deals with issues of human existence. In one of his letters to a friend, Büchner expressed his desire to find "menschliche Ausdrücke" in order to adequately articulate human affairs (HA 2: 421). In other letters Büchner relates his attraction to religious songs (HA 2: 415), his desire to articulate a new spiritual life in the folk (455), and his growing attraction to, and affinity with the folk and the middle ages (HA 2: 464). Büchner was attempting to articulate an understanding of the world based on the traditions and language(s) of the common people. In Lenz Büchner allows the character of Lenz to utter one of his most important statements about his own aesthetic principles. At one point Lenz is discussing literature with Kaufmann, who is an admirer of "idealistic" literature. Lenz vociforously disagrees with Kaufmann, stating:

> Die Dichter, von denen man sage, sie geben die Wirklichkeit, hätten auch deine Ahnung davon, doch seyen sie immer noch erträglicher, als die, welche die Wirklichkeit verklären wollten...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 sey, Leben habe, stehe über diesen Beiden, und sey das einzige Kritierium in Kunstsachen. (Büchner, HA 1: 449)

Büchner seeks a way of writing that is capable of articulating the characters in terms of their human qualities. That is, Büchner claims to articulate all aspects of his characters, as they are. This is relevant to this thesis in that carnivalized literature can reestablish the ties to the people, according to Bakhtin. As outlined above,

because carnivalized literature works with the assimilated genres of popular culture, its ties to that culture are more direct than literature that seeks to work only within the realm of literary tradition. The "idealist" writers referred to by Büchner are considered to have attempted to severe the ties to real life, thus making their writing lifeless and irrelevant to the everyday life of the people. The connections to public life have been weakened to the point that they can hardly be recognized. Büchner, on the other hand, wanted to seek a new spiritual life in the people, using the traditions of the people to write in a manner that was consistent with those traditions.

3. Carnivalesque Laughter. Büchner's understanding of laughter and comedy are carnivalesque. Büchner insists that his laughter is not one-dimensional, or monological. In a letter to his family in February, 1834, Büchner explains that he does not laugh at how people are, but rather he laughs at them because they are human beings (HA 2: 422). In this same letter he states that "die Dummheit gehört zu den allgemeinen Eigenschaften der menschlichen Dinge," this does not by any means imply that he despises a person merely because he points out that that person is a fool. Everybody is a fool to some degree or another. As Lukens remarks on this point, Büchner considers real fool to be the one who does not recognize the her/his own foolishness (183). He criticizes those who only seek foolishness in others. He considers

these people scornful, arrogant despisers ("Verachter") (HA 2: 423). This type of person is an elitist who seeks to distance her/himself from the masses. These "Verachter" deserve Büchner's hatred, because they undermine the love that should bind human beings. We should view Büchner's statements concerning laughter in terms of Bakhtin's notion that carnival possesses an all-embracing laughter that equalizes all of its participants. Carnival laughter is not mocking or disdainful only of others or only of the weak; it is directed at all and everyone equally and cannot be limited to a simplistic, univocal, satirical tone, directed only at one's enemies.

As noted by Dedner ("Lachen," 303-304), Büchner may have been using the power of humor against the power of seriousness. That is, through making that which is usually taken seriously appear in a humorous light, the once serious images are "brought down to earth." This is entirely consistent with Bakhtin's notion of the function of carnivalized literature, and it is consistent with Büchner's literary as well as socio-cultural understanding. Dedner goes on to say that we can see three kinds of laughter operating in Büchner:

> Das Lachen des Spottes als Waffe gegen den Haß und den Hochmut anderer; das Lachen dessen, der sich als Narr gibt, um Distanz zu halten und sich 'viel Langeweile' zu ersparen; und schließlich das Lachen dessen, der das bürgerliche 'Sie' mit dem plebejischen 'Du' vertauschte und der die ernstahaften Menschenrechtserklärer mit einer heiteren Narrenrechtserklärer ärgert. (305)

In Leonce und Lena we can see all three types of laughter operating, but the specific focus of my thesis is on the third type of laughter: carnivalesque laughter. That is, laughter that allows the fool license to laugh at the powerful. This is also the laughter that the serious thinkers become angry at because it refuses to take a firm position.

4. Sensualist/Materialist. Büchner is a materialist in the sense that he understands human behavior to be shaped by material forces. He states: "das Verhältniß zwischen Armen und Reichen ist das einzige revolutionäre Element in der Welt, der Hunger allein kann die Freiheitsgöttin...werden" (HA 2: 441). Büchner also states that "unsere Zeit ist rein materiell" (HA 2: 455). Büchner understands material lack to be the motivating factor behind any action on the part of the uneducated masses. As long as the masses are lacking adequate foodstuffs, the potential to turn this lack into a revolutionary movement is there. As we see in a letter to Gutzkow in 1836, the forces Büchner sees operating in society are material lack, raw force, and a sort of religious fanaticism (HA 2: 455). We see in this letter that Büchner gives no credence to the notion that abstract philosophical or political ideas will move the people to revolt. If they are to be moved it will be by the force of power, the lure of food and material goods, or under the banner of a fanatical religious devotion. These themes appear in Leonce und Lena,

and they serve as a crucial linkage between the theory of the carnivalesque and the realization of carnival images in Büchner's literary practice.

Part III

VALERIO AND THE CARNIVALESQUE

This section of my thesis begins with a schematic summary of Leonce und Lena, followed by a brief outline summarizing the status of the character of Valerio in the critical literature, and concludes with a descriptive analysis of Valerio's role in the drama. Without summarizing the plot of the drama in detail, I will trace the outline of the plot in order to provide the contextual framework for the analysis of Valerio's character which follows. Instead of providing an exhaustive account of Valerio's reception in the critical literature, those critical remarks about the character of Valerio that are relevant to my analysis are my focus. Following my descriptive analysis of Valerio's carnivalesque characteristics, there is a discussion of the function of the character of Valerio's in Leonce und Lena and in the larger context of the drama. In concluding this section I will then discuss the limitations of the character of Valerio, which result from his use of a carnivalesque strategy, and I will locate this assessment within the broader discussion regarding the socio-political dimensions of Leonce und Lena.

A. Summary of "Leonce und Lena"

Leonce und Lena portrays the struggle of Prince Leonce to come to terms with his life in the kingdom of Popo. The drama opens with Leonce lounging on a bench in a garden, talking about spitting on a rock and wondering how he can find new ways to occupy his time, in order to fend of boredom. Leonce indicates to the audience that he cannot take his role as a member of the nobility seriously, as other members of the Popo court are apparently able to do. In the opening scene the stage is set for the development of the drama: Leonce appears unable or unwilling to accept his role as Prince and indicates his desire to be somebody else, "Nur 'ne Minute lang" (HA 1: 106; 1.1)

At the moment when Leonce indicates this desire to become someone other, or to play the role of another, Valerio enters the scene. Valerio is running and is "halb betrunken" (HA 1: 106; 1.1). This image of Valerio running makes an impression on Leonce, who exclaims that he would love to have a reason to run as Valerio is running. Leonce seems to idealize what is essentially a matter of life or death for Valerio. As we find out in the "Polizeydiener" fragment, Valerio is being pursued by the authorities, because Valerio has sold his bed in order to obtain drinking money.

Valerio and Leonce appear to reach an immediate understanding, as indicated when Valerio points to his nose and Leonce shows that he understands completely what Valerio

means by this sign. This gesture can be understood to be a sign indicating that the interlocutors are to be careful about what they say, because police informants or the police are in the area. This gesture contextualizes Valerio's relationship with Leonce and Valerio's role in the drama: Valerio is on the run and is seeking a way to avoid being apprehended. Not only this, Valerio is also seeking a way to stop his "läufiger Lebenslauf" (HA 1: 141; fragment). That is, Valerio reports that he has come to the realization that he must find a way to settle down, because he is becoming ill. It is in this context that we can understand his desire to become Minister of State at Leonce's court. Valerio is seeking a way to be assured of having food, drink, and a roof over his head.

Valerio's role as guide and advisor to Leonce arises out of Leonce's desire to avoid an arranged marriage to Princess Lena, of the kingdom of Pipi. After we see Leonce kill his "love" for Rosetta, with whom we are to assume he has had a sexual relationship, Leonce is informed by the President that he is to meet with his bride-to-be the next morning, and that following his marriage to Lena, he will assume the reigns of power. Leonce cannot imagine allowing this to happen: he has had a dream of his "ideal" woman, and he is convinced that he must find this "incredibly stupid" and "incredibly beautiful" woman. Leonce appeals to Valerio for help. After Valerio offers numerous unsatisfactory possibilities, Leonce is

inspired by the idea to embark upon a journey to Italy, the land of the "Lazzarone."

In the fourth scene of the first act, we are introduced to Lena and her Governess. Lena is apparently deeply unhappy about her proposed marriage to Leonce. She argues that it is not right that she is given no choice in whom she will marry. She draws analogies to her situation, implying that her arranged wedding is like that of a crucifixion, with her hand being nailed to the hand of Leonce. She wonders why she cannot marry a man whom she loves. Lena then compares herself to a flower, in apparent reference to her virginity and its impending, involuntary end. She argues that even a flower is able to chose when to open its petals and wonders why a King's daughter is less worthy than a flower. Lena's Governess apparently perceives Lena's despair and tells Lena to come with her. Lena and the Governess are to embark upon a journey of their own.

We follow the two pairs (Leonce and Valerio, Lena and the Governess) intermittently to the point where they meet up with each other. The point at which the two pairs meet resembles Valerio's entry into the drama. After Leonce's relatively playful wandering with Valerio, he is apparently beginning to become depressed. We can see this in Leonce's lament that he is so anxious about his existence that he could sit in a corner and cry for himself (HA 1: 121; 2.2). In contrast to Leonce's melancholy, Valerio appears to be in his element. He is out in the open and free to frequent any

pub he may find. He compares himself and Leonce to the jack and king of cards respectively and notes that the only thing they are missing is a beautiful woman with a "Lebkuchenherz auf der Brust" and a "mächtigen Tulpe worin die lange Nase sentimental versinkt" (HA 1: 122; 2.2). At this point Lena and the Governess magically appear. After a brief verbal joust between Valerio and the governess, Lena and Leonce speak metaphorically to one another about the length of the journey they are on, and then they part. It is apparent that this dialogue with Lena has had a strong effect on Leonce and, according to Valerio, Leonce evidences in this dialogue that he is a fool (HA 1: 123; 2.2).

For Leonce und Lena the way to their marriage is all downhill from this point. They still do not know each other's identity, and they will not know this until the final scene of the drama, but they are apparently irresistibly drawn to each other. The only possible stumbling block in their relationship is the officially arranged wedding between Prince Leonce und Princess Lena. Because their identities are still unknown to each other, the question is how to get King Peter to accept Leonce's marriage with the "Unaussprechlichen, Namenlosen" (i.e., with Lena) (HA 1: 126; 3.1). After Valerio gets Leonce's promise that Valerio will be Leonce's Minister of State if he is allowed to marry Lena, Valerio indicates that he has a plan that will achieve the desired marriage (HA 1: 126; 3.1). Valerio will make use of

masks to conceal the identity of our lovebirds and to (apparently) subvert the orders of the king.

This brings us to the character of King Peter. We first meet King Peter in his room getting dressed. King Peter is rambling about substances and things-in-themselves, referring to himself as the thing-in-itself and his clothing as his attributes, modifications, affections, and accidents. We are to believe that King Peter is a self-proclaimed philosopher king. This picture of the philosopher king is further elaborated when King Peter refers to his penis as his "freie Wille" (HA 1: 108; 1.2). King Peter is a self-described thinking being, who not only must think for himself but must also think for his people, if only he could remember them.

King Peter apparently seeks to order his kingdom in a symmetrical fashion. He states that he gets confused when he must venture out into the world and speak publicly (HA 1: 109; 1.2). He forgets who he is when he must speak aloud. He reports that he is uncertain whether it is he who is speaking or an Other. What King Peter seemingly really wants is to be able to engage in pure thought. This can be clearly seen in the final scene, when King Peter tells Leonce that all he desires is to retire with his "Weisen," so that he can think without being disturbed (HA 1: 133; 3.3). King Peter has apparently been so confused by Valerio's subterfuge that he must retreat from all of the confusion that has been created by Leonce und Lena's masquerade marriage.

As mentioned above, Valerio indicated to Leonce that he would come up with a plan to effect his marriage to Lena, if Leonce promised Valerio a position as Minister of State. As we see in the final scene, Valerio's plan was for himself, Leonce, Lena, and the Governess to come to the court in masks and to propose a "wedding in effigy" or a mock wedding with the masked pair of automotons (Leonce und Lena). Valerio's plan magically fits in with king Peter's need to carry out his order of the festival celebration of his son's wedding to princess Lena. Leonce and Lena are then married in effigy. As we know, after the masks are removed, the king recants his blessing and Leonce und Lena are distressed over the power of fate and destiny which has brought them together.

After accepting the "destined" ("O Zufall!", "O Vorsehung!") nature of their marriage, Leonce appears ready to assume the role of king (HA 1: 133; 3.3). He tells his subjects that they can all go home and that tomorrow they will begin the "game" all over from the start. After checking with Lena about his initial presentation of their new life together at his court, Leonce sees Lena's disapproval and changes his conception of their future. Whereas Leonce's initial plan was of a return to the status quo, with the only change being that of the figures of king and queen, Leonce appears in the end to revert to his vision of a life lived in the idealized world of the 'Lazzarone' (i.e., carnivalesque Italy). Leonce offers a conception of the Land of Cockaigne where the sun will never set and summer

will never end. He appears to shift to this scheme effortlessly, and his final lines in the drama are of this vision of the Land of Cockaigne.

The last word in Leonce und Lena is left to Valerio, which confirms his central role in the drama. Valerio expands upon Leonce's plan for realizing the Land of Cockaigne in the kingdom of Popo by telling the audience that he will impose a decree--in his assumed role as Minister of State--to instantiate the order of the Land of Cockaigne in the kingdom of Popo. We are left at the end of the drama with a situation where Valerio has apparently achieved his goal: he has acquired a position in the "Narrenhaus," where he will be fed, clothed, receive good haircuts, and have a roof over his head. What are we to make of the character of Valerio and his portrayed success within Leonce und Lena?

B. Critical Reception of the Character of Valerio

Until recently, the character of Valerio has not been given major consideration in the critical literature. He is chiefly considered a marginal character who serves as Leonce's court fool. Interpretations along this line argue that Valerio is a "Parasit eines Parasiten" bent on "Karrierismus" (Hiebel 134, 140), that Valerio mainly functions as Leonce's shadow or dialectical opposite (Hauser 343; Völker 126), or that Valerio functions as an integrated part of courtly life in the person of the court fool (H.Mayer 311; Poschmann 203). The critical literature tends to focus

on Leonce and his relationship with Lena, or on his role as nobleman and his condition of melancholic idleness.

The character of Valerio fulfills a critical function in Leonce und Lena. Some critics (Daase; Lukens; Richards) locate Büchner's authorial voice in Valerio's lines. As Daase points out, Valerio dominates most of the dialogue in Leonce und Lena and his character occupies a central position in the constellation of characters (380). In addition, we find out more about the character of Valerio than any of the other characters (Daase 386). Lukens concurs, stating that Valerio's dramatic function "clearly outweighs that of any other character, including the title 'hero' and 'heroine'" (6). She points out that the tempo and mood shift immediately upon Valerio's entrance and that Leonce increasingly identifies with Valerio as the drama progresses (4). According to Lukens, Valerio sets the "dominant tone of the dramatic reality with his gruesome wit" and "cultivates folly as a weapon against a society that deems itself reasonable" (12) and as a trap into which societies representatives will fall (110).

It is generally agreed that Valerio functions in the role of the fool. Certain critics trace this role of the fool back to the commedia dell'arte (see Voss 277), picaresque literature (see Daase 394), or to Shakespeare (see Lukens 1-2). Lukens is most obviously relevant to my thesis in her awareness--through the work of Kaiser--that the "fool figure of the theater actually originates in the medieval

drama of the carnival;" but along with Kaiser, she seems to read the carnival as a "religious" festival--which is very different from my Bakhtinian reading of this tradition--and she does not explore the cultural tradition of carnival per se, but rather returns to the literary tradition in order to explore the fool within the context of theater.[9] Though I do not disagree with these assessments, I would like to further pursue the location of the character of Valerio within this tradition. That is, I think Bakhtin offers a valuable extension of the context for interpreting the tradition of the fool in terms of his carnivalesque heritage. Lukens alludes to the carnivalesque descent of the fool, and Daase briefly draws attention to the carnivalesque aspects of Valerio's character and concludes that he may be read as a carnivalesque figure,[10] but the implications of the

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[9]My work is deeply indebted to Lukens' work, and the differences in our approaches are a matter of perspective. The main difference stems from my work with Bakhtin and his understanding of carnival and carnivalized literature. Lukens is apparently unaware of Bakhtin's work in this area. Lukens reminds the reader that she is interested in analyzing the character of Valerio in his role as the court fool and that she will not be exploring the broader manifestations of of the fool in literature and culture. She further limits her comparative study by choosing the "`theatrical fool tradition'" as her frame of reference (23). I am obviously not limiting my study to the theater or solely to the court fool, but rather have broadened my scope to include heterogeneous socio-cultural artifacts in my thesis.

[10]Though Daase does mention the carnivalesque aspects of the character of Valerio, he does not explore this line of investigation. He does mention the relevance of Bakhtin in a footnote (391), but his general approach to investigating the

carnivalesque context for our understanding of the dramatic function of the fool have not been investigated in detail.[11]

In her analysis of Valerio as a functional representative of the tradition of the fool in literature, Lukens notes that Büchner can be seen as a return to the tradition of Shakespeare, in that the fool serves an integral dramatic function rather than being merely an accessory to the dramatic action (12-13). Valerio's role in the drama is centered on Leonce's immediate identification with Valerio and Valerio's assumption of the characteristic role of the fool as guide/antagonist to the nobility. Lukens argues that Valerio consistently functions to spur Leonce on, but in a very ambivalent manner. On the one hand Valerio confronts Leonce with the possibility of using his own imaginative powers to play the role of the fool (38), while on the other hand he consistently destroys Leonce's romantic absolutizing visions (50). Valerio is "both the initiator of the action, and the one who cancels any conscious belief in it; he is the initiator of both illusion and disillusionment" (64). That

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character of Valerio is in the direction of using theories of comedy and laughter to locate Valerio's function in the drama. Daase's study is very rich and provocative, and I find myself in agreement with him on many points.

[11]Bristol's work on the relation of carnival and Shakespeare's works is a recent attempt to investigate the carnivalesque dimensions of the fool. Bristol works from a Bakhtinian perspective, using the notion of carnival and carnivalized literature. My work has many theoretical similarities to Bristol's, but our readings of Bakhtin are slightly different in emphasis and perspective.

is, Valerio seems to consistently reside on the border between construction and destruction, he is both positive and negative.

The possibility of reading Valerio's character as a socio-cultural critique has already been mentioned in the critical literature. Lukens argues that the depicted social order in Leonce und Lena is called into question as a result of Valerio's "foolish" critique (103). Berns discusses Leonce und Lena and Valerio's function in terms of the tradition of the "Zeremoniellkritik" and "Prinzensatire" and argues that there are many instance of critique that are situated in the intertext of Leonce und Lena (270). Wawrzyn provides a Marxist interpretation of Leonce und Lena and briefly comments on the critical function of Valerio's character within this framework (99). Wawrzyn makes an interesting comment concerning Valerio's status as a "Narr." He claims "unter diese Kategorie des Narren fällt Valerio, ohne daß er ganz in ihr aufginge. Denn seine Streiche, Reden und Possen sind nicht einfach nur lustig, sondern haben einen sozialen Bezug" (111). Although I agree that the character of Valerio's has this critical function, I do not agree that we need to look outside the character of the "Narr" in order to locate this critical role.

C. Descriptive/Interpretive Analysis of the Character of Valerio

In this section I will provide a more detailed discussion and analysis of Valerio's character. To do this, I will also discuss and analyze other characters in the drama in order to provide an interpretive context for our understanding of Valerio. In particular, Leonce is a main focus of this discussion, as it is in relationship to Leonce that we need to understand Valerio, and vice versa.

As mentioned in the plot summary, we first see Valerio in the context of Leonce's lamenting his inability to take his role in life seriously as well as his incapability to become someone else. This is a defining moment in the drama: it contextualizes the relationship between Leonce and Valerio and provides the background against which we are to understand Valerio's character. In effect, Leonce is problematizing the notion of identity. He provides images of the senselessness of life at court and leaves the audience with a sense that one would have to be a mindless idiot to take any role at court seriously.

As Leonce is lying around on a bench in the garden, the tutor approaches, prompting him to utter the following discourse on boredom and idleness:

> Müßiggang ist aller Laster Anfang. --Was die Leute nicht alles aus Langeweile treiben! Sie studieren aus Langeweile, sie beten aus Langeweile, sie verlieben, verheirathen und vermehren sich aus Langeweile und sterben endlich an der Langeweile und--und das ist der Humor davon--Alles mit den wichtigsten Gesichtern, ohne zu merken warum, und

> meinen Gott weiß was dabei. Alle diese Helden, diese Genies, diese Dummköpfe, diese Heiligen, diese Sünder, diese Familienväter sind im Grunde nichts als raffinierte Müßiggänger.--Warum muß ich es grade wissen? Warum kann ich mir nicht wichtig werden und der armen Puppe eine Frack anziehen und einen Regenschirm in die Hand geben, daß sie sehr rechtlich und sehr nützlich und sehr moralisch würde?--Der Mann, der eben von mir ging, ich beneidete ihn, ich hätte ihn aus Neid prügeln mögen. O wer einmal jemand Anders sein könnte! Nur 'ne Minute lang.-- (HA 1: 106; 1.1)

In the fragments to the play, Leonce adds at this point:

> ...Warum muß ich es grade wissen? Ich bin ein elender Spaßmacher. Warum kann ich meinen Spaß nicht auch mit einem ernsthaften Gesicht vorbringen?--Der Mann, der eben von mir gieng.... (HA 1: 138; fragment)

These lines, which directly precede Valerio's entrance into the drama, contextualize the entire play. Leonce's lament essentially undermines the seriousness and the credibility of dominant, officially "respectable" social roles in society. He cannot understand how the heroes and geniuses, the priests and family patriarches can go about their business with such serious faces. He is confused about the ability of these people to take themselves and their roles seriously, and he actually finds it humorous in a pathetic way. He is confused and envious of them for the apparent lack of reflexivity that allows these "ernste" people to go about their lives unaware of the fact that they are nothing but "raffinirte Müßiggänger." These refined loafers think that there is actually a divine providence guiding their life and providing meaning to their senseless existence. Leonce is envious to the point where he could thrash these people for their

apparent confidence in the providential nature of the order of things. He laments that he is merely an "elender Spaßmacher" and wonders why he cannot take his role as a joker seriously. We will see these themes and images reappear throughout Leonce und Lena, and it is my contention that these lines serve as the crucial interpretive horizon for the play.

This opening scene serves to completely undermine any serious acceptance of the official order in the play. If we are to understand life in the kingdom of Popo from the perspective of an insider, i.e., Leonce, then all of those people who are able to take their roles seriously at the court are really refined loafers and fools. These serious people are merely not conscious of the senselessness and hypocrisy of courtly life, and if they were aware, they would fall into the nihilistic state in which Leonce appears to find himself.

Another instance where we see the official order being undermined is when the President attempts to inform Leonce of the plans for his wedding to Princess Lena. The President is immediately untracked upon approaching Leonce and Valerio and begins to nervously snap his fingers, prompting the following exchange:

> LEONCE: Mein Gott, stecken Sie doch die Hände in die Hosen, oder setzen Sie sich darauf. Er ist ganz aus der Fassung. Sammeln Sie sich.
> VALERIO: Man darf Kinder nicht während des Pissens unterbrechen, sie bekommen sonst eine Verhaltung.
> LEONCE: Mann, fassen Sie sich. Bedenken Sie Ihre Familie und den Staat. Sie riskieren einen

> Schlagfluß, wenn Ihnen Ihre Rede zurücktritt. (HA 1: 114; 1.3)

Here we see Leonce metaphorically beating up on a man who is apparently one of the refined, serious loafers. The President is an official representative, attempting to carry out his official duties in a serious manner. Instead of reciprocating this official seriousness, Leonce subverts any notion of seriousness by remaining seated on the floor and freely associating with the word "Platz." This apparent lack of seriousness and obvious subversion of official protocol unsettles the President, as evidenced by his nervously snapping his fingers. The official duties of the President are equated with urinating. That is, the function fulfilled by the President is as mindless as the function of a child urinating. But if this essentially mindless function is interrupted, the entire existence of the person attempting to execute it will be sent into turmoil. This is very important to our understanding of the carnivalesque strategies operating in this drama. Merely by denying the official order, its assumed regularity and mindless acceptance, the official order is brought to a crisis.

Leonce's sense that there is no question of seriously and self-consciously accepting one of the officially recognized and sanctioned roles in the kingdom of Popo has sent him into a nihilistic spiral. He considers these roles to be a senseless joke, but he is unable to see an alternative way to live. Enter Valerio. As already

mentioned, immediately upon Leonce's conclusion of the crucial, "O wer einmal jemand Anders sein könnte! Nur 'ne Minute lang.--," Valerio runs onto the stage half drunk. This image makes a great impression upon Leonce, who remarks, "Wie der Mensch läuft! Wenn ich nur etwas unter der Sonne wüßte, was mich noch könnte laufen machen" (HA 1: 106; 1.1). We see here that Leonce envies Valerio, but this envy is based on altogether different reasons than his envy of the "serious" people. Leonce sees a playful freedom in Valerio's running and, as we will see below, he seeks to capture what he sees as Valerio's playful approach to life. We can see this idealized identification in Leonce's opening lines, where he states: "Dann--habe ich nachzudenken, wie es wohl angehn mag, daß ich mir einmal auf den Kopf sehe. --O wer sich einmal auf den Kopf sehen könnte! Das ist eins von meinen Idealen" (HA 1: 105; 1.1). Leonce's ideals cannot be adequately realized at the court, or so he says; this is evidenced by his utter boredom in the opening scene. Leonce realizes his predicament when he states that he cannot take himself and his role seriously. To take his role seriously is a prerequisite for taking the reigns of power, which he is destined to soon do. He is seeking an outlet for desires which cannot be adequately satiated by the life at court. He tries to take a mistress (Rosetta), but this does not seem to satisfy his ideal of a "Frauenzimmer"; only the woman at the end of a Romantic journey can do this. Leonce is in dire straits and is seeking a way to realize his ideals. As I

will argue below, Leonce is drawn increasingly more into an idealized identification with Valerio's role as a possible means to realize his ideals, and Valerio uses this to his advantage.

We see the point of Leonce taking Valerio on as a guide explicitly portrayed in the "Rosetta" scene. Leonce has just cruelly and coldly dismissed his mistress Rosetta. He has reportedly killed his love for her by placing it in his head ["Mein Kopf! Ich habe unsere Liebe darin beigesetzt" (HA 1: 111)], and after Rosetta departs, Leonce holds a monologue about his inability to experience the "weißen Gluthstrahl der Liebe" (HA 1: 112). Once again, Leonce is lamenting his inability to take even this aspect of being a nobleman seriously. He does not appear able to enjoy the nobleman's priviledge of keeping mistresses in order to experience the entire spectrum of love. We pick up the Leonce's monologue at its midpoint:

> Meine Herren, meine Herren, wißt ihr auch, was Caligula und Nero waren? Ich weiß es.--Komm Leonce, halte mir einen Monolog, ich will zuhören. Mein Leben gähnt mich an, wie ein großer weißer Bogen Papier, den ich vollschreiben soll, aber ich bringe keinen Buchstaben heraus. Mein Kopf ist ein leerer Tanzsaal, einige verwelkte Rosen und zerknitterte Bänder auf dem Boden, geborstene Violinen in der Ecke, die letzten Tänzer haben die Masken abgenommen und sehen mit todmüden Augen einander an. Ich stülpe mich jeden Tag vir und zwanzigmal herum, wie einen Handschuh. O ich kenne mich, ich weiß was ich in einer Viertelstunde, was ich in acht Tagen, was ich in einem Jahre denken und träumen werde. Gott, was habe ich denn verbrochen, daß du mich, wie einen Schulbuben, meine Lection so oft hersagen läßt?-- (HA 1: 112; 1.3)

Leonce is portrayed at his wit's end. He does not feel able to provide any direction to his empty, meaningless, and automated existence. When the President informs Leonce that his marriage to Princess Lena is to be carried out the next day and that Leonce will thereupon become king, Leonce appears to go over the edge. Leonce appeals to Valerio for advice saying: "Valerio! Valerio! Wir müssen was Anderes treiben. Rathe!" (HA 1: 112; 1.3). Valerio then runs off the already-discredited, "serious" options of becoming scientists, scholars, heroes, geniuses, useful members of society, all of which Leonce rejects. When Leonce rejects Valerio's conclusion that the only other option is to "get lost," he is apparently suddenly inspired by the vision of the land of the Lazzarone, that is Neapolitan Italy, or the land of carnival. Leonce proposes that he and Valerio embark upon a journey to Italy. How did Leonce come to this inspiration?

As mentioned above, Valerio is introduced to us as a drunken man on the run, or at least as a drunken man who is running. We see another contextual clue to interpreting Valerio's role when Valerio first gestures to and speaks to Leonce. Valerio runs onto the stage, positions himself close in front of the Prince, points to his nose, stares at the Prince, and says "Ja!" (HA 1: 106; 1.1). Leonce responds to this gesture by doing the same and uttering "Richtig!" Valerio then asks: "Haben Sie mich begriffen?" To which Leonce replies: "Vollkommen." In concluding this image,

Valerio states: "Nun, so wollen wir von etwas Anderen reden," at which point Valerio lays down in the grass and begins to speak nonsensically about his conception of nature. It appears that Leonce and Valerio achieve some sort of mutual understanding based on Valerio's gesture of pointing to his nose. On the basis of this understanding Valerio tells us that they will consequently speak of other topics: namely, nonsensical topics. How are we to understand Valerio's gesture, given its apparent importance?

Valerio's role is contextualized by his pointing to his nose immediately upon meeting Leonce. Valerio is unknown to Leonce at this point, but immediately upon their meeting one another they appear to have an understanding of what their relationship will be. This gesture can be interpreted as an implicit understanding among those who employ it as a warning that operatives of the police apparatus are in the area and that one should watch what one says (Morris et al. 216-224; Dedner, Katalog 301). A further confirmation of this interpretation of Valerio's gesture, is the 'Flieg an der Wand' song that Valerio could sing all day (HA 1: 107; 1.1). Burghard Dedner (Katalog 301) and Voss (339) tell us that this song was sung by revolutionaries to warn that the police were nearby or that police informants were among them. The song was meant to warn the revolutionaries to watch what they said.

Viewing Valerio's gesture in this light, we can better understand what he means when he tells Leonce that they can

talk about something else. Leonce has indicated to Valerio that he understands what Valerio means by pointing at his nose, and he appears to agree with Valerio's request that they change the subject. In light of this mutual understanding, Valerio and Leonce will hereafter speak in a circumlocutious or dissembling manner, that is, they will talk about "something else." The contextualization of Valerio's role and his relationship with Leonce provided by this gesture provide important clues in our attempt to understand the centrality of Valerio's role in Leonce und Lena and what has brought Valerio to the kingdom of Popo.

As we find out in the police fragment, Valerio is on the run. Two policemen approach Valerio and Leonce, first watching to see if either of them runs. When neither Valerio nor Leonce run, the police ask them some apparently nonsensical questions. The police are carrying a wanted poster that is seeking a physically nondescriptive person who is considered to be a "höchst gefährliches Individuum" (140). We learn of the events that have apparently distinguished this wanted person as "höchst gefährlich" when the policemen have the following conversation:

> 1.P.: ...Denn wenn ich mich betrinke und mich in mein Bett lege, so ist das meine Sache und geht Niemand was an, wenn ich aber mein Bett vertrinke, so ist das die Sache von wem, Schlingel?"
> 2.P.: Ja, ich weiß nicht.
> 1.P.: Ja, ich auch nicht, aber das ist der Punkt. (HA 1: 140; fragment).

The fact that the wanted man sold his bed in order to obtain drinking money and that this type of activity does not

correspond to any normal pattern of behavior has distinguished him as highly dangerous. The behavior in question does not fit into any traditional patterns of behavior that the police are aware of, and this is precisely what is criminal about the action. Valerio's attempt to drop out of the everyday order is criminal precisely because it cannot be comprehended and safely assimilated by the established order. The fact that someone could attempt to live outside of the established order of things cannot be accepted, because it would suggest that another way of life is possible. It is as though Valerio is dangerous because he serves as a reminder that there is an alternative to the passive acceptance evidenced by the peasants. Valerio is a "Jungfrau" in terms of work, and he will do what he has to do in order to maintain his purity (HA 1: 107; 1.1). This is dangerous to the authorities. How will they collect taxes if nobody works? Even though it seems it should be Valerio's business if he works or not, this refusal on his part to find his place in the order of things on others' terms has gotten him into trouble.

After the two policemen leave, Valerio indicates to us that he indeed is the one they are seeking when he tells us that he took his mattress out into the sun to air out and ended up at the Inn of the Moon where he squeezed some wine "aus meinem Strohsack" (HA 1: 140; fragment). Valerio attributes this sequence of events to providence and says that the same turn of events has brought him to the kingdom

of Popo. When Leonce remarks that this is an "erbaulicher Lebenslauf", Valerio responds as follows:

> Ich habe einen läufigen Lebenslauf. Denn nur mein Laufen hat im Lauf dießes Krieges mein Leben vor einem Lauf gerettet, der ein Loch in dasselbe machen wollte. Ich bekam in Folge dießer Rettung eines Menschenlebens einen trocknen Husten, welcher den Doctor annehmen ließ, daß mein Laufen ein Galopieren geworden sey und ich die galoppierende Auszehrung hätte. Da ich nun zugleich fand, daß ich ohne Zehrung sey, so verfiel ich in oder vielmehr auf ein zehrendes Fieber, worin ich täglich, um dem Vaterland einen Vertheidiger zu erhalten, gute Suppe, gutes Rindfleisch, gutes Brod essen und guten Wein trinken mußte. (HA 1: 140f; fragment)

Valerio has been living a life on the run and his health is suffering as a result. Beside the possible autobiographical references to Büchner's own situation of living in exile, having to flee the authorities, and suffering various illnesses that will eventually lead to his death, we can see here a rather serious tone in these lines. Valerio was apparently confronted with the choice of continuing his "läufiger Lebenslauf," which in this context means racing ahead of those who would like to put a bullet in him, or trying to find a way to settle down and take care of himself. If we view this scene in connection with a later scene in which Valerio discusses what he can expect to achieve by means of his sound reason, we acquire a better picture of how Valerio intends to resolve his predicament.

As we saw in the preceding passage from the drama, Valerio appears to be seeking a way to survive. In the

following passage Valerio is considering his options, or the lack thereof. Valerio sees his options as follows:

> ...Und zu diesen köstlichen Phantasieen bekommt man gute Suppe, gutes Fleisch, gutes Brod, ein gutes Bett und das Haar umsonst geschoren--im Narrenhaus nämlich--, während ich mit meiner gesunden Vernunft mich höchstens noch zur Beförderung der Reife auf einen Kirschbaum verdingen könnte, um--nun?--um? (HA 1: 107; 1.1)

What we see in these lines is the important opposition between food and fame. These themes are of central importance to this drama, as indicated by their presence in the prologue. Here Alferi utters "E la fama?" ("And fame?") and Gozzi responds with "E la fame?" ("And hunger?") (HA 1: 103). The significance of these questions can be read in the light of Valerio's apparent paradox. Valerio is apparently confronted with two basic options: the path of hunger or the path of fame. The path of hunger is exemplified in Leonce und Lena by the portrayal of the peasants and in Valerio's "läufiger Lebenslauf". If Valerio openly lives his life according to his inclinations, desires, and values, he will probably end up imprisoned or dead, as was indicated in the "Polizeidiener" fragment. If he tries to operate on the basis of his "gesunden Vernunft" he will only be able to promote the ripening of cherry trees, which is utterly absurd. If he assumes his "correct" place in society and lives by the officially accepted norms of conduct, he will have to assume the role of a passive peasant. The only way to sustain himself as a defender of the Fatherland appears to

be by playing the role of the fool, but more about that later.

In terms of a carnivalesque reading of Leonce und Lena, Lent, the path of hunger appears to dominate Popo culture. Although the peasants are preparing for the celebration of Leonce and Lena's wedding they are not festively celebrating; the pedagogical forces of Popo are portrayed as "culturing" and "domesticating" the starving peasants. As the Schoolmaster and the Magistrate are speaking about the preparations for Leonce and Lena's upcoming wedding, the dialogue runs as follows:

> LANDRATH: Lieber Herr Schulmeister, wie halten sich Eure Leute?
> SCHULMEISTER: Sie halten sich so gut in ihren Leiden, daß sie sich schon seit geraumer Zeit aneinander halten. Sie gießen brav Spiritus in sich, sonst könnten sie sich in der Hitze unmöglich so lange halten. Courage, ihr Leute! Streckt eure Tannenzweige grad vor euch hin, daß man meint ihr wärt ein Tannenwald und eure Nasen die Erdbeeren und eure Dreimaster die Hörner vom Wildpret und eure hirschledernen Hosen der Mondschein darin, und merkt's euch, der Hinterste läuft immer wieder vor den Vordersten, daß es aussieht als wärt ihr ins Quadrat erhoben. (HA 1: 127; 3.2)

This dialogue continues, and a few lines later the Schoolmaster says to the peasants:

> Seid standhaft! Kratzt euch nicht hinter den Ohren und schneuzt euch die Nasen nicht mit den Fingern, so lang das hohe Paar vorbeifährt und zeigt die gehörige Rührung, oder es werden rührende Mittel gebraucht werden. Erkennt was man für euch thut, man hat euch grade so gestellt, daß der Wind von der Küche über euch geht und ihr auch einmal in eurem Leben einen Braten riecht. Könnt ihr noch eure Lection? He! Vi!

What we see here is the portrayal of the path of hunger, that is, Lent. The peasants show no signs of revolting or resisting an order that is clearly oppressive. They apparently accept their role as props in the kingdom of Popo, even though they can barely stand. The peasants are forced to stand in line--symetrically-- and learn their "Vivat," and they are told that they should consider themselves fortunate to be able to smell the roast cooking in the kitchen. There is absolutely no sense that the peasants are celebrating or enjoying the preparation for the wedding festival. Instead of a scene where the peasants are drunk and festively celebrating, we have a portrayal of a peasantry that has used alcohol to numb their pain. The peasants passively and numbly accept this "Affenkomödie" (see Büchner's letter, HA 2: 413, letter 1; 415, letter 5) and play along with it. We see no valorization of the peasants, but rather a brutal, unapologetic portrayal of a passive population meekly accepting their domination.

Whereas the peasants are portrayed as passively and ignorantly accepting their official roles in society, Valerio is portrayed as actively seeking a role commensurate with his epicurean inclinations and his capacity of employing his sound reason. If we are to take Valerio at his word, he is an intelligent person who is aware of what is going on around him. Another of Valerio's characteristic's is his avowed epicureanism. He proclaims the value of enjoying life at all costs. He disdains the notion of having to work a "normal"

job to earn a living (HA 1: 107; 1.1) and he cherishes good food and drink (HA 1: 113; 1.1). Valerio often allegorizes life in terms of food and drink (HA 1: 121; 1.2), and as we saw above, he has tried to live his life according to these values. Which brings us back to Valerio's response to the question of fame or hunger.

In contrast to the peasant's passive acceptance of their fate, Valerio responds actively and subversively: he takes what he wants, thus subverting the oppressive and denying order of things. We see this in act one, scene three, or the "Rosetta" scene:

> VALERIO: Warten Sie, wir wollen uns darüber sogleich ausführlicher unterhalten. Ich habe nur noch ein Stück Braten zu verzehren, das ich aus der Küche, und etwas Wein, den ich von Ihrem Tische gestohlen. Ich bin gleich fertig.
> LEONCE: Das schmatzt. Der Kerl verursacht mir ganz idyllische Empfindungen; ich könnte wieder mit dem Einfachsten anfangen, ich könnte Käs essen, Bier trinken, Tabak rauchen. Mach fort, grunze nicht so mit deinem Rüssel, und klappre mit deinen Hauern nicht so. (HA 1: 113)

Valerio conquers the Lenten order on a personal level. Instead of accepting his hunger passively he steals the food and wine he knows is in the castle. He uses his abilities in order to survive, that is, in order to receive food, haircuts, and a place to sleep. In this case we see Valerio taking a direct approach to his hunger: he steals the food and wine that is available to him.

Valerio's relationship to food and the theme of hunger is very different from what we see portrayed in the case of the peasants. Valerio is immersed in the material world and

feels himself to be a vital part of it. But he also realizes that real world forces interrupt this relationship, especially in terms of hunger. He is reduced to ideals of having food, just as the peasants are reduced to merely smelling roast. We see this clearly in Valerio's response to Leonce in the following dialogue:

> VALERIO: Ach, Herr, was ich ein Gefühl für die Natur habe. Das Gras steht so schön, daß man ein Ochs seyn möchte, um es fressen zu können, und dann wieder ein Mensch, um den Ochsen zu fressen, der solches Gras gefressen.
> PRINZ: Unglücklichter, Sie scheinen auch an Idealen zu laboriren.
> VALERIO: O Gott! ich laufe schon seit 8 Tagen einem Ideal von Rindfleisch nach, ohne es irgendwo in der Realität anzutreffen. (HA 1: 138f; fragment)

This fragment would most logically be placed directly before the above cited lines where Valerio compares his sound reason to folly, and what one can expect by employing the one or the other in life (HA 1: 107: 1.1). As we see in this exchange, Valerio jokes about transforming himself into an ox and then back into a man so that he can not only experience the ox's joy of eating the beautiful grass, but also the man's joy of eating the ox. Valerio is portrayed as having a carnivalesque relationship with nature. He is lost in nature and he is portrayed as presenting the boundaries between his person and nature are as fluid. When Leonce points out the irrationality of this vision, by calling it idealistic, Valerio responds by pointing out that for him food is often a matter of imagination, because the real world does not

adequately provide for concrete opportunities to eat meat, as we clearly saw in the depiction of the peasants.

What we see here is an articulation of three different relationships to food and eating. The peasants are portrayed in their passive acceptance of their hunger and inferior diet. Valerio actively and subversively responds to his hunger by stealing food from Leonce's kitchen and wine from his table. Leonce responds to Valerio's apparent grotesque enjoyment of his stolen goods by experiencing idyllic emotions, once again perceiving Valerio's relation to food as idealistic. But the reader can clearly see from the description of how Valerio is devouring the food that his relationship to food is far from idealistic; it is grotesque. Valerio is snorting and smacking his lips so much that even Leonce is disrupted out of his idyllic reading of Valerio's relationship to food.

We see Valerio's relationship to food and hunger paralleled in his statements about work. Following his lines about chasing after his "ideal" of beef Valerio turns to to topic of work and engages Leonce in the following dialogue:

> VALERIO: Seht dieße Ameisen, liebe Kinder, es ist bewundernswürdig welcher Instinkt in dießen kleinen Geschöpfen, Ordnung, Fleiß--Herr, es giebt nur vier Arten, sein Geld auf eine menschliche Weise zu verdienen, es finden, in der Lotterie gewinnen, erben oder in Gottes Namen stehlen, wenn man die Geschicklichkeit hat keine Gewissensbisse zu bekommen.
> PRINZ: Du bist mit dießen Prinzipien ziemlich alt geworden ohne vor Hunger oder am Galgen zu sterben.
> VALERIO: *ihn immer ansehend.* Ja Herr, und das behaupte ich, wer sein Geld auf eine andere Art erwirbt ist ein Schuft.

> PRINZ: Denn wer arbeitet ist ein subtiler Selbstmörder, und ein Selbstmörder ist ein Verbrecher und ein Verbrecher ist ein Schuft, also, wer arbeitet ist ein Schuft.
> VALERIO: Aber dennoch sind die Ameisen ein sehr nützliches Unzeziefer und doch sind sie wieder nicht so nützlich, als wenn sie gar keinen Schaden thäten. Nichts destoweniger, werthestes Ungeziefer, kann ich nir nicht das Vergnügen versagen einigen von Ihnen mit der Ferse auf den Hintern zu schlagen, die Nasen zu putzen und die Nägel zu schneiden. (HA 1: 139; fragment)

Immediately following these lines Valerio and Leonce are approached by the policemen and interrogated. We can see here that Valerio is contrasting the mechanical manner in which these ants do their work with "humane" ways of making money. That is, if humans are truly superior to, or in some sense more valuable than insects then it seems to follow that humans should display a truly human character in their work that is superior to that of the ants. Valerio considers earning money in any way other than the four "humane" ways to be a form of suicide and thus a criminal act. As Leonce remarks, it is somewhat remarkable that Valerio has survived this long operating on the basis of such subversive values. The question for us then is how does Valerio succeed in sustaining himself as a defender of the Fatherland?

Valerio has already ruled out the option of spontaneously living according to his inclinations and desires, as this would land him in prison or get him killed. He has also negated the possibility of leading an acceptable existence solely on the basis of his sound reason, as this path leads to the occupation of promoting the ripening of

cherry trees, an absurd notion that reflects the senselessness of the world he lives in. That is, there is no possibility of living an adequate existence by working and producing things on the basis of sound thinking and reasoning. The option of using one's abilities for rational, self-determined ends really does not seem to be a possible alternative, according to Valerio. As we saw above, the option of honest work simply does not exist; work is a form of suicide. On the other hand, we can clearly see that Valerio does not passively or nihilistically accept his lot in life. That is, Valerio, presumably a peasant, gives us no indication that he considers the option of being a obedient, diligent peasant a viable alternative. He clearly understands the world he lives in as extending a person rights only as far as the right to be born. We see this understanding expressed when Valerio and Leonce are obliquely discussing the issues of education and descent. As the reader will recall, this discussion occurs following the Rosetta scene, where Valerio is responding to Leonce's command that Valerio quit eating his stolen meat so grotesquely.

> LEONCE: Meinst du, damit du zu deinen Prügeln kämst? Bist du so besorgt um deine Erziehung?
> VALERIO: O Himmel, man kömmt leichter zu seiner Erzeugung, als zu seiner Erziehung. Es ist traurig, in welche Umstände Einen andere Umstände versetzen können! Was für Wochen hab' ich erlebt, seit meine Mutter in die Wochen kam! Wieviel Gutes hab' ich erlebt, seit meine Mutter in die Wochen kam! Wieviel Gutes hab' ich empfangen, das ich meiner Empfängnis zu danken hätte? (HA 1: 113;1.3)

What we see here is a further undermining of the possibility of accepting or finding an adequate role in society. In Valerio's world a person's opportunities extend to the fact that s/he was born and that s/he exists. To expect anything further goes beyond the concrete possibilities offered by the world.

Given that Valerio has ruled out the path of of hunger we are left with the path of fame. As outlined above, Valerio can either passively accept pauperism, overtly confront society and risk imprisonment, or place himself in the service of the court where he will lead a comfortable life. Valerio has apparently chosen the third option, that is, the path of fame. The only problem for Valerio is that he is aware of the absurdity of court life, as is Leonce. Valerio will not be able to unconsciously and uncritically adopt the role of court servant, as the President and the Tutor have done. Instead of trying to obtain a position in a system that he considers valid and worthy, Valerio maneuvers in and around the system, trying to get as much out of it as he can. He is not a political activist. He is not an altruistic, thoroughly moral hero. He is trying to survive. He has already told the reader/viewer that operating on the basis of sound reason will get him nowhere, so we must assume that he is employing some additional techniques or tools to achieve his ends. As I will argue in more detail below, Valerio chooses the technique of carnivalesque subversion and appropriation to follow the path of fame. Through his

ability to destabilize the order of the kingdom of Popo--to turn it upside down, so to speak--Valerio is able to make individual gains; he uses Leonce and King Peter to gain a powerful position within their kingdom, thereby achieving his place in the "Narrenhaus," where he will be fed, clothed, and receive good haircuts (HA 1: 107; 1.2).

Although they are both aware of the senselessness of court life, Valerio's strategy for dealing with life at court is different from Leonce's. Whereas Leonce dreams of being able to play the role of court servant seriously, Valerio does not even consider taking court life seriously. We see Valerio's opinion of court service expressed clearly in "Alexander der Große" discussion. Leonce tells Valerio that Valerio's singing his "Flieg an der Wand" song could make one into a fool, to which Valerio responds:

> So wäre man doch etwas. Ein Narr! Ein Narr! Wer will mir seine Narrheit gegen meine Vernunft verhandeln? Ha, ich bin Alexander der Große! Wie mir die Sonne eine goldne Krone in die Haare scheint, wie meine Uniform blitzt! Herr Generalissmus Heupferd, lassen Sie die Truppen anrücken! Herr Finanzminister Kreuzspinne, ich brauche Geld! Liebe Hofdame Libelle, was macht meine theure Gemahlin Bohnenstange? Ach bester Herr Leibmedicus Canthariden, ich bin um einen Erbprinzen verlegen. Und zu diesen köstlichen Phantasieen bekommt man gute Suppe, gutes Fleish, gutes Brod, ein gutes Bett und das Haar umsonst geschoren--im Narren haus nämlich--, während ich mit meiner gesunden Vernunft mich höchstens noch zur Beförderung der Reife auf einen Kirschbaum verdingen könnte, um--nun?--um? (HA 1: 107; 1.1)

Valerio compares being a court servant to providing fantasies of the kind enumerated above. But if he does become a fool and he does provide fantasies for the court, he will at least

be able to survive. As discussed above, even if he does try to operate on the basis of sound reason he will be reduced to senseless and foolish occupations, so this option seems to offer no benefits whatsoever in a world constituted such as Valerio's world is.

Valerio plays the role of the court fool as a mask, and we can assume that he will do the same in his capacity as Minister of State. Valerio will do what is necessary to survive and that means to play the roles convincingly and to use his deceptive and evasive tactics whenever he is about to be discovered. Valerio takes an active stance, and this active approach is the enactment of the role of the carnivalesque rogue. Valerio is a pragmatic survivalist; he uses the tools at hand to make the best of the circumstances and he does not operate on the basis of ideals which would bring him into overt conflict with the more powerful forces of the monarchy.

We can see a two-fold strategy followed by Valerio: on the one hand Valerio must conceal his real identity, thus his carnivalesque use of the masks and his joking, which functions as a mask; on the other hand, Valerio must have a way to achieve his goal of survival by means of obtaining a ministerial post at the court. This he does by apparently giving people in power what they want. Valerio knows what Leonce wants, and so does the reader, in that Leonce is seeking a way to "see the top of his head" and he wants to become someone else, that is, Leonce wants to become

(an)other. Leonce wants to become a serious joker, thus leaving his present condition of suffering joker behind. Valerio offers him the promise of becoming a true fool and Leonce is compelled by this possibility.

What follows is a discussion of the two aspects of Valerio's strategy. First I will outline those aspects of Valerio's character that can be seen as functioning to subvert and undermine the authority of officially accepted versions of reality. Secondly, I will discuss how Valerio appears to achieve his goal of securing a place in the "Narrenhaus," that is, how Valerio succeeds in becoming Leonce's Minister of State. The first aspect of his strategy appears to be negative and destructive, the second positive and creative. In this connection, the reader is referred to the discussion of the ambivalent nature of carnival outlined above. We should remember that in its apparent destruction of what it parodies and laughs at, carnival does not seek to obliterate what it destroys. Carnival merely undermines prematurely and unsatisfactorily finalized understandings of the order of things, which functions to open up room for discussion about the order of things. That is, carnival essentially loosens up fixed understandings which in turn provides an opening for discussion of those same topics. Though carnival does not provide the positive content of those discussions, it helps bring about the possibility of discussion by providing a space for that discussion.

1. Carnivalesque Subversion of Power

a) Deception. Consistent with the first dimension of Valerio's two-fold strategy, Valerio's character is deceptive. Valerio avoids taking any firm positions: positions that would delimit his character and enable us to firmly position him ideologically. We are constantly confronted with Valerio's word games and jokes which undermine any attempts at seriousness. Whenever we see the potential for Valerio to become involved in a serious moment in the drama he undermines this seriousness with some joke, riddle, or absurd vision, thereby achieving his "Auskommen." This deceptive maneuvering is consistent with the jokester's philosophy of "gay deception," as outlined by Bakhtin.

Valerio offers an indication of the deceiving, dissembling basis upon which he operates when he says "ein Auskommen hat man jeden Augenblick mit seinem Witz, wenn man nichts mehr zu sagen weiß, wie ich zum Beispiel eben, und Sie, ehe Sie noch etwas gesagt haben" (HA 1: 115;1.3). This is a fundamental mechanism of the carnivalesque, subversive strategy: through the use of nonsensical humor the carnivalesque rogue achieves freedom to maneuver. This line of Valerio's serves as a key to interpreting his function in this text. Whenever Valerio is at a loss for words, or whenever he seems to be close to being "found out," he resorts to "foolish" (in the sense of "fool like") behavior in order to "break out of" any firm position that would make him vulnerable to other's attempts to delimit his character.

The above-quoted line is part of a rejoinder to Leonce, who declares Valerio is "nichts als ein schlechtes Wortspiel. Du hast weder Vater noch Mutter, sondern die fünf Vokale haben dich miteinander erzeugt." Valerio then counters: "Und Sie Prinz, sind ein Buch ohne Buchstaben, mit nichts als Gedankenstrichen. --Kommen Sie jetzt meine Herren! Es ist eine traurige Sache um das Wort kommen..." Valerio then engages in a play on the word "kommen" and its various meanings with different prefixes. Leonce, who we are to assume has an understanding of what Valerio is all about, describes Valerio in terms that are consistent with the tradition of the fool: a person who is of uncertain origin and a poor play on words.

b) Marginalization. Valerio is a marginal figure in the sense that he exists on the border; he does not allow himself to be delimited to a specific and constant identity; he insistently reserves the right to be other; he continually violates norms by presenting the grotesque, the foolish, the multiplicitous, and the chaotic. Valerio's insistent lack of a centered ego functions to undermine all attempts to define his character according to stable categories. To try to define his character is to describe his function. Valerio has no stable identity, but he is not insane. Valerio says he is of sound mind and claims that he operates on the basis of sound reason. If this is so, then it seems that this characteristic lack of a stable identity is a mask. Valerio

has assumed the role of the fool as a response to society. He tells us this much. The question to be answered is why does he assume the role of the fool.

c) Otherness. Throughout Leonce und Lena we can find indications of Valerio's otherness. For example, Leonce introduces Valerio with the statement "O. wer einmal jemand Anders sein könnte! Nur'ne Minute lang--" at which time Valerio enters the stage "halb betrunken" (HA 1: 106; 1.1). This introduction can be seen as a reference to the carnivalesque element of a disguised and multiplicitous identity, which is a constant theme in Leonce und Lena. This aspect of an unstable identity is seen by Bakhtin as a central feature of the carnivalesque rogue. The rogue always reserves the right to be other. The rogue is able to exploit the positions offered to her/him by the various identities s/he adopts, but the rogue can exploit these strategic identities only as a mask. This strategy of maintaining otherness is essentially a negative, evasive strategy: the rogue can criticize and undermine others' statements from these positions, but s/he cannot claim a firm identity or point of view from these unstable identities.

The aspect of insistent otherness can be seen in Valerio's character when Valerio refuses to identify himself when King Peter asks him who he is. Valerio, Leonce, the Governess and Lena come to the the king's castle wearing

masks. When they arrive the following dialogue between Valerio and King Peter ensues:

> PETER: Wer seid Ihr?
> VALERIO: Weiß ich's? *Er nimmt langsam hintereinander mehrere Masken ab.* Bin ich das? oder das? oder das? Wahrhaftig ich bekomme Angst, ich könnte mich so ganz auseinanderschälen und blättern.
> PETER: *verlegen.* Aber--aber etwas müßt Ihr dann doch sein?
> VALERIO: Wenn Eure Majestät es so befehlen. Aber meine Herren hängen Sie dann die Spiegel herum und verstecken sie ihre blanken Knöpfe etwas und sehen sie mich nicht so an, daß ich mich in ihren Augen spiegeln muß, oder ich weiß wahrhaftig nicht mehr, wer ich eigentlich bin.
> PETER: Der Mensch bringt mich in Confusion, zur Desperation. Ich bin in der größten Verwirrung. (HA 1: 130f; 3.3).

As we know, Valerio has apparently decided that he can bring about Leonce and Lena's wedding by deceiving the king as to their identity. I will discuss the positive aspects of this strategy below. What interests us here is the subversive aspects of this strategy. What we see in this scene is Valerio taking his uncertain identity so far as to claim that he himself is uncertain as to who he really is. He says that he is actually scared at the possibility that his self could disintegrate. We see that Valerio understands his vacillating identity is a result of his reflecting/refracting what the nobility wants to see in him. Valerio's identity, or lack thereof, is a result of his strategy of deception through reflecting and refracting the expectations of the court. He claims to do this to such an extent that he himself is no longer certain of his own identity.

If we are to take Valerio at his word, his character has no stable content: he is merely a reflection of what the nobility want to see in him. Valerio is a chameleon-like figure; he will change in order to adapt to the needs of the situation. Valerio achieves his goals by presenting an identity that is a reflection/refraction of the values and beliefs of the nobility. Valerio does not maintain a stable self, he is continually something other. This ultimate otherness, this utter lack of a substantive identity completely unsettles King Peter, whose thinking is dominated by a rationalistic philosophy (see Voss, 1987; Dedner, 1987; Poschmann, 1981).

King Peter categorizes everything--down to his cuff links and his penis--in rationalistic, philosophical terms. He wants everything to be systematic and symmetrical. When Valerio appears completely unsystematic and unstable this undermines King Peter's stability, whereupon he must retire to think undisturbed by the world. Following the revelation that it actually was Leonce and Lena who were married, King Peter gives his relieved blessing to the marriage, and states:

> ...Ich lege aber auch hiermit feirlichst die Regirung in deine Hände, mein Sohn, und werde sogleich ungestört jetzt bloß nur noch zu denken anfangen. Mein Sohn, du überlässest mir diese Weisen *er deutet auf den Staatsrath*, damit sie mich in meinen Bemühungen unterstützen. Kommen Sie meine Herren, wir müssen denken, ungestört denken. *Er entfernt sich mit dem Staatsrath.* Der Mensch hat mich vorhin confus gemacht, ich muß mir wieder heraushelfen. (HA 1: 133; 3.3)

This is an interesting turn of events considering the tradition of the fool in literature and culture. Usually the fool serves as a corrective to characters who have strayed from the norm (Lukens). That is, the fool points out the folly of the vain ruler in order that the ruler may recognize his folly and amend his ways. In the case of Valerio and King Peter, we see Valerio winning the confrontation of fool and ruler. Valerio has so undermined the king's stability that the king must take his wise men with him so that he can think, undisturbed by the world. That is, the king--as we saw in act one, scene three--only becomes confused when elements of the real world enter into his brilliant thinking process, so in order to reestablish his stability he must retreat from the world.

For example, when the king is finally reminded of what he wanted to remember by tying a knot in his handkerchief, the king happily remarks:

> Ja, das ist's, das ist's. --ich wollte mich an mein Volk erinnern! Kommen Sie meine Herren! Gehn Sie symmetrisch. Ist es nicht sehr heiß? Nehmen Sie doch auch Ihre Schnupftücher und wischen Sie sich das Gesicht. Ich bin immer so in Verlegenheit, wenn ich öffentlich sprechen soll. (HA 1: 109;1.3)

In a related manner, when the king is speaking to the State Council a few lines later, he states: "Der Mensch muß denken. *Steht eine Zeit lang sinnend.* Wenn ich so laut rede, so weiß ich nicht wer es eigentlich ist, ich oder ein Anderer, das ängstigt mich. *Nach langem Besinnen.* Ich bin ich.--Was halten Sie davon Präsident?" In light of the

king's obviously ridiculous inability to think or speak clearly, the fact that he will now be allowed to engage in this senseless activity uninterruptedly can hardly be see as a great victory on his part. This turn of events essentially portrays Valerio' victory over the truly mad King Peter. The king retreats to a self-imposed oblivion of confused thought and Valerio appears to have maneuvered himself into a position of influence and authority at Leonce's court. I will discuss this "positive" aspect of Valerio's strategy of carnivalesque otherness below.

Valerio consistently transgresses norms. He does this so consistently that he subverts the normal reading of things and converts his abnormal reading into the normal. That is, Valerio's statements and activities are so consistently abnormal or norm-transgressive that there begins to be a certain normality to his comportment. This normality is achieved within the tradition of the carnivalesque fool. Valerio strikes Leonce as such a fool that Leonce calls him "nothing but a poor play on words." Valerio considers nothing to be out of bounds: he will take any issue and turn it into a joke. He takes everything to its limit. For example, in his many plays on words, he follows traces of meaning hinted at by some aspect of a word and carries his association or misunderstanding to a point of absurdity. For example, in continuing their discussion of education and conception Leonce and Valerio engage in the following dialogue:

> LEONCE: Meinst du, damit du zu deinen Prügeln kämst? Bist du so besorgt um deine Erziehung?
> VALERIO: O Himmel, man kömmt leichter zu seiner Erzeugung, als zu seiner Erziehung. Es ist traurig, in welche Umstände Einen andere Umstände versetzen können! Was für Wochen hab' ich erlebt, seit meine Mutter in die Wochen kam! Wieviel Gutes hab' ich empfangen, das ich meiner Empfängniß zu danken hätte?
> LEONCE: Was deine Empfänglichkeit betrifft, so könnte sie es nicht besser treffen, um getroffen zu werden. Drück dich besser aus, oder du sollst den unangenehmsten Eindruck von meinem Nachdruck haben.
> VALERIO: Als meine Mutter um das Vorgebirg der guten Hoffnung schiffte...
> LEONCE: Und dein Vater an Cap Horn Schiffbruch litt...
> VALERIO: Richtig, denn er war Nachtwächter. Doch setzte er das Horn nicht so oft an die Lippen, as die Väter edler Söhne an die Stirn.
> LEONCE: Mensch, du besitzest eine himmlische Unverschämtheit. Ich fühle ein gewisses Bedürfnis, mich in nähere Berührung mit ihr zu setzen. Ich habe eine große Passion dich zu prügeln.
> VALERIO: Das ist eine schlagende Antwort und ein triftiger Beweis.
> LEONCE: *geht auf ihn los.* Oder du bist eine geschlagene Antwort. Denn du bekommst Prügel für deine Antwort.
> VALERIO: *läuft weg, Leonce stolpert und fällt.* Und Sie sind ein Beweis, der noch geführt werden muß, denn er fällt über seine eigenen Beine, die im Grund genommen selbst noch zu beweisen sind. Es sind höchst unwarscheinliche Waden und sehr problematische Schenkel. (HA 1: 113f; 1.3)

On the surface, this dialogue between Valerio and Leonce appears illogical, but when we consider the context of the statements, we can see the carnivalesque logic at work. Leonce initiates this exchange by inquiring about Valerio's concern for his upbringing or education. By playing on the word "Erziehung" Valerio is able to slide into a discussion of his conception (*Erzeugung*), or origin. Valerio is of uncertain origin, and the discussion of Valerio's descent is

apparently unsettling for Leonce. Leonce tells Valerio that he had better tread lightly on this topic or he may be unhappy with Leonce's response to his utterance. When Valerio hints that he is possibly of noble birth, Leonce states that Valerio has a sublime impertinence, and that this impertinence drives Leonce to a desire to thrash Valerio. As we know, Valerio dodges Leonce's attack and once again articulates this attack in terms of his carnivalesque logic.

Valerio plays on the word *prügeln* and tells the reader/viewer that Leonce's reaction to his statements is a striking response (or answer) and an impressive proof. Proof of what? What we see here is Valerio's subversive effect achieved through his apparently nonsensical, carnivalesque play on words. He takes situations and discussions beyond their acceptable limits, and by subverting the traditional norms and official understandings of the order of things he unsettles his interlocutors. Even Leonce, who is apparently somewhat aware of what Valerio is about, is so aroused by Valerio's impertinence that he feels an urge to beat him. It appears as though this carnivalesque, subversive effect is so unsettling that it can bring one to violence. It is as if Leonce is so aroused by Valerio's complete undermining of the discursive norms that he can think of no other response than an almost animalistic, violent attack on Valerio. Valerio appears ready for this response, as he handles Leonce's assault in stride.

Valerio's articulation of Leonce's failed assault is instructive. After Leonce lunges at Valerio and misses him, Valerio responds as follows:

> *läuft weg, Leonce stolpert und fällt.* Und Sie sind ein Beweis, der noch geführt werden muß, denn er fällt über seine eigenen Beine, die im Grund genommen selbst noch zu beweisen sind. Es sind höchst unwarscheinliche Waden und sehr problematische Schenkel. (HA 1: 114; 1.3)

Valerio calls Leonce a proof that remains to be proven, even down to his physical existence. That is, in the context of this discussion of descent and upbringing, Valerio has apparently unsettled Leonce. Valerio's reading of this situation is that Leonce's entire existence is yet to be articulated in a satisfactory manner. As we saw with the king, rationalistic philosophy has not provided a satisfactory support for his existence, and Leonce is painfully aware of this. In this passage Valerio is forcing this problematic aspect of Leonce's existence into the forefront, and, according to Valerio, he completely undermines the stability of that existence.

d) Profanation. Valerio consistently undermines the stability and seriousness of the roles portrayed in Leonce und Lena. Profanation is a key carnivalesque technique that Valerio employs throughout the drama in order to achieve this subversion. For example, when Valerio discusses the only "humane" ways to earn money, one of these ways is to steal money "in Gottes Namen" (HA 1: 139; fragment). This is a

blatant reference to the church and the nobility taking money from the peasants in order to support their lifestyles. Simmilarly, Valerio thoroughly profanes and undermines the sanctity of the church when he harasses the court priest as the priest is preparing to perform the marriage in effigy. Valerio harasses and undermines the priest's authority, thoroughly confusing the priest before and during the wedding ceremony. Valerio has the following conversation with the priest:

> VALERIO. Fang' an! Laß deine vermaledeiten Geschiter und fang' an! Wohlauf!
> HOFPREDIGER. (in der größten Verwirrung) Wenn wir--oder--aber-
> VALERIO. Sintemal und alldieweil--
> HOFPREDIGER. Denn--
> VALERIO. Es war vor Erschaffung der Welt--
> HOFPREDIGER. Daß--
> VALERIO. Gott lange Weile hatte-- (HA 1: 132; 3.3)

The priest is apparently unhappy with this marriage in effigy, but Valerio so confuses him that he is reduced to uttering conjunctions. King Peter must rescue the priest from this predicament by telling him to make it short and sweet. This sequence shows how Valerio undermines his interlocutors by profaning the institution that they represent and subverting their attempt to perform the requisite functions of these institutions. Valerio goes so far as to indicate that God created the world out of boredom, reminding us of Leonce's earlier discourse on this topic. The priest becomes so unraveled and so confused at Valerio's

verbal barrage that we have to wonder about the seriousness with which the priest is able to carry out his function.

We can also see profanation in Valerio's lines about the "Lebkuchenherz" and in his lines regarding marriage and life at the court. Valerio strips the relationship between men and women of all romantic facades, reducing them to a more primal, grotesque dimension. For example, when Leonce and Valerio and Lena and the Governess are on their journeys, Leonce and Valerio are discussing their journey. Leonce is becoming melancholic and Valerio responds in the following manner:

> ...Die Erde und das Wasser da unten sind wie ein Tisch auf dem Wein verschüttet ist und wir liegen darauf wie Spielkarten, mit denen Gott und der Teufel aus Langerweile eine Parthie machen und Ihr seid der Kartenkönig und ich bind ein Kartenbube, es fehlt nur noch eine Dame, eine schöne Dame, mit einem großen Lebkuchenherz auf der Brust und einer mächtigen Tulpe, worin die lange Nase sentimental versinkt, *die Gouvernante und die Prinzessin treten auf* und--bei Gott da ist sie! Es ist aber eigentlich keine Tulpe, sondern eine Prise Tabak und es ist eigentlich keine Nase, sondern ein Rüssel. *Zur Gouvernante.* Warum schreiten Sie Werthest, so eilig, daß man Ihre weiland Waden bis zu Ihren respectablen Strumpfbändern sieht? (HA 1: 122; 2.3)

In the case of Lena, Valerio does not see a mighty tulip, but rather a pinch of tobacco. He then destroys this "sentimental" vision one step further by remarking that it is not really a matter of sinking one's long nose into the mighty tulip, but rather of sinking one's "trunk" ["Rüssel"] into the snuff. What we see here is the explicit subversion of a superficial, sentimental vision of the female-male

relationship. Instead of articulating the woman as a beautiful flower that the man "sniffs" with his nose, the relationship is portrayed in a more grotesque manner. What we have in reality, according to Valerio, is more akin to a pinch of snuff which is to be enjoyed by a trunk. This vision totally destroys the sentimental, idealized vision of the female-male relationship, by bringing it down to the grotesque bodily dimension. The real reason that people are attracted to one another is not due to some idealized emotions, but rather to more animal-like desires. This reading is consistent with Valerio's epicurean lifestyle, as well as the traditional carnivalesque portrayal of sexual relations.

Valerio again destroys the image of "Wertheresque" sentimentality when Leonce is preparing to throw himself into the river because he has apparently reached the pinacle of existence following his rendezvous with Lena. Valerio denies Leonce his "Leutnantsromantik" and tells him to wake up to reality (HA 1: 125; 2.4). As Valerio points out, what good will it do Leonce to kill himself when it is as a result of his living that he experiences his beloved in the first place. Once again, we see that Valerio has embodied these sentimental emotions and undermined their effect by showing their senselessness. That is, if Leonce truly loves Lena, then what sense does it make to "realize" these emotions by throwing himself in the river? If Leonce were to commit suicide he would no longer be able to experience this love,

because he would have destroyed the vehicle of this love, that is, his body. We see this in Valerio's query: "Its denn Eure Hoheit noch nicht über die Lieutenantsromantik hinaus, das Glas zum Fenster hinaus zu werfen, womit man die Gesundheit deiner Geliebten getrunken" (HA 1: 125; 1.4). As we find out, the fellow with the "gelben Weste und seinen himmelblauen Hosen"-- that is, Werther--has ruined everything for Leonce. Valerio says "amen" to that, and appears very pleased to have saved Leonce's life. For if Leonce were to kill himself, how would Valerio be able to continue his path to the "Narrenhaus"? The essential point here is that Valerio undermines the seriousness with which these sentimental notions of fundamentally sexual/bodily relationships can be taken. He does this by profaning the sentimental imagery and re-rooting this imagery in its bodily dimensions.

e) Inversion. Valerio turns the values and assumptions of society upside down. A prime example of this carnivalesque inversion is evidenced when Valerio states his conviction that work is a form of suicide and that the only humane ways to acquire money are to steal it, to find it, or to win it in the lottery (HA 1: 139; fragment 1.1). Here we see the carnivalesque inversion whereby the everyday conception of work is suspended or turned upside down: to work is a sin, and not a virtue. If one wants to make a living in a virtuous manner one will win it, find it, or steal it. At

the end of the drama, Valerio is given the final word. He once again presents a world turned upside down, but this time he is presenting his vision of the instantiation of carnival in the kingdom of Popo as the new order of life. Those who work will be declared criminal, crazy, and dangerous to the state. Thus we see that he is ready to carry this inverted logic as far as it will take him.

2. Carnivalesque Assimilation of Power

The other aspect of Valerio's two-fold strategy is his attempt to sustain himself as a defender of the Fatherland by obtaining a position at Leonce's court. The means by which Valerio seeks to do this is to win Leonce's favor by getting him what he wants. He does this by playing the role of Leonce's carnivalesque guide. From the opening lines of the drama it is apparent that Leonce is not happy with his lot in life and that he has ideals that he feels cannot be realized at court. Immediately upon seeing Valerio, Leonce feels an affinity for Valerio and apparently reaches a covert understanding with him. Valerio's capacity as guide becomes more apparent following the Rosetta scene, when Leonce explicitly asks Valerio for advice and tells him that they must do something else. Leonce states his disaffection for the idea of marrying Lena, whom he has yet to meet, because he wants to find the woman of his dreams. When Leonce and Valerio run through a possible list of alternative courses of action that Leonce could take, and possible roles that he

could take on, Leonce apparently stumbles upon the idea of heading to Italy, the land of the Lazzarone.

Valerio enters upon Leonce's lament "O wer einmal jemand Anders sein könnte! Nur 'ne Minute lang" and Leonce's wonderment at how Valerio can run (HA 1; 106; 1.1). In his "crisis moment" Leonce turns to Valerio and asks what he can do. After Valerio offers some "respectable" alternatives (116; 1.3), Leonce himself comes up with the idea of going to Italy to partake of the spirit of carnival; Leonce wants to become a Lazzarone (117; 1.3). The carnivalesque images contained in this passage are unmistakable: Leonce speaks of "Tarantell" and "Tambourin," Lazzaroni, and torch-lit nights full of music and masks. Leonce and Valerio then embark on their journey.

Until Leonce meets Lena he is on a sort of carnivalesque high. After he meets Lena, and after he begins to think about his life again, he states: "Gott sei Dank, daß ich anfange mit der Melancholie niederzukommen. Die Luft ist nicht mehr so hell und kalt, der Himmel senkt sich glühend dicht um mich und schwere Tropfen fallen" (HA 1: 123; 2.2). Leonce is apparently becoming serious about himself and his role as a nobleman. Valerio confirms Leonce's return to the order of nobility by stating the follwing:

> Nein. Der Weg zum Narrenhaus ist nicht so lang, er ist leicht zu finden, ich kenne alle Fußpfade, alle Vicinalwege und Chausseen dorthin. Ich sehe ihn schon auf einer breiten Allee dahin, an einem eiskalten Wintertag den Hut unter dem Arm, wie er sich in die langen Schatten unter die kahlen Bäume

> stellt und mit dem Schnupftuch fächelt.--er ist ein Narr! *folgt ihm.* (HA 1: 123; 2.3)

We should interpret this notion of the Narrenhaus in light of Valerio's earlier lines about the "Narrenhaus" where he talks about the role of the court servants and the "Phantasieen" that they perpetrate in service to the nobility (HA 1: 107; 1.1). That is, the "Narrenhaus" is the house of the nobility and the true fools are the noblepersons and their servants who inhabit these places and take their roles seriously. Valerio knows his way to the madhouse, and he intends to accompany Leonce all the way there.

The path to the madhouse that Valerio sees he can take is to facilitate the marriage of Leonce and Lena. The third act begins with Leonce informing Valerio of his intention to marry Lena. After Valerio's remark that this will bring Leonce into the official order of the eternal calender, we find the following dialogue:

> LEONCE: 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? Und dann kann ich doch einer gewissen Art von Leuten, die sich einbilden, daß nichts so schön und heilig sei, daß sie es nicht noch schöner und heiliger machen müßten, die Freude lassen. Es liegt ein gewisser Genuß in dieser lieben Arroganz. Warum soll ich ihnen denselben nicht gönnen?
> VALERIO: Sehr human und philobestialisch. Aber weiß sie auch, wer Sie sind?
> LEONCE: Sie weiß nur daß sie mich liebt.
> VALERIO: Und weiß Eure Hoheit auch, wer sie ist?
> LEONCE: Dummkopf! Frag doch die Nelke und die Thauperle nach ihrem Namen.
> VALERIO: Das heißt, sie ist überhaupt etwas, wenn das nicht schon zu unzart ist und nach dem Signalement schmeckt.--Aber, wie soll das gehn? Hm!--Prinz, bin ich Minister, wenn Sie heute vor Ihrem Vater mit der Unaussprechlichen, Namenlosen,

> mittelst des Ehesegens zusammengeschmiedet werden? Ihr Wort?
> LEONCE: Mein Wort!
> VALERIO: Der arme Teufel Valerio empfiehlt sich Seiner Excellenz dem Herrn Staatsminister Valerio von Valerienthal.--'Was will der Kerl? Ich kenne ihn nicht. Fort Schlingel!' *Er läuft weg, Leonce folgt ihm.* (HA 1: 126)

We see that Leonce is determined to marry Lena, and that he is firmly in the grasp of his "Leutnantsromantik ." Instead of a tulip and a long nose, Leonce uses the analogy of a carnation and a dewdrop, and reprimands Valerio for asking him about the identity of the carnation, that is, Lena. Though Valerio once again parodies this understanding of the unspeakable or indescribable nature of the nameless one, he seems to realize that if Leonce has made up his mind to marry Lena, then he must go along with this decision. The explicit nature of Valerio's strategy is apparent in this scene. We can see Valerio contemplating a possible strategy to carry this off, but first he wants Leonce's word of assurance that he will become Minister of State if he is able to help Leonce bring off the wedding to Lena. Leonce gives Valerio his word and follows Valerio to his wedding. Now all that is left for Valerio to do is to get King Peter to assent to this wedding.

Leonce and Lena are married under carnivalesque conditions. Valerio dominates the marriage ceremony, providing the framing context for the marriage ("Automaten" speech, HA 1: 131; 3.3), and he is the driving force behind this marriage in effigy. Though the symbols of official authority (i.e., Church and State officials) are present at

this marriage and sanction its occurrence, the marriage itself occurs within the context of the carnivalesque, as indicated by Valerio's functions as the contextualizer of the ceremony. First of all, Valerio so confuses King Peter that King Peter is brought to the point of desperation before Valerio proceeds with his "Automaten" speech (131). Following Valerio's Automaten speech, the still supposedly confused King Peter comes up with the idea of a marriage in effigy, which of course is a result of Valerio's speech. Valerio then harasses and undermines the priest's authority, thoroughly confusing the priest before and during the wedding ceremony (HA 1: 132; 3.3). The priest is apparently unhappy with this marriage in effigy, but Valerio so confuses him that he is reduced to uttering conjunctions. King Peter must rescue the priest from this predicament by telling him to make it short and sweet.

This sequence indicates that Valerio is in control of the action. Valerio controls the course of events by undermining his interlocutors. He seems to lead his interlocutor to the action or decision that will get Valerio what he wants--in this case the marriage of Leonce und Lena so that Valerio will become Minister of State--and then he leaves it to the interlocutor to actually make the decision. At the point that the interlocutor makes the decision s/he is so unraveled and so confused that we have to wonder about the seriousness with which s/he was able to consider her/his position. Here again we see a sense that Valerio's strategy

of undermining those in positions of authority has had a positive result in terms of moving him closer to his goal, that is, becoming Minister of State.

We are left to wonder what will happen the next day when the official ceremonies return. If we follow the tradition of carnival in culture we must assume that the official order will reassert itself; and we see that Leonce is prepared to do this, until he sees Lena's disdain for the image of returning to the official order (HA 1: 134; 3.3). With his final lines, Leonce offers us a completely unrealistic and romantic vision of the land of Cockaigne, and Valerio complements this vision with a traditional vision of Cockaigne (HA 1: 134; 3.3). This world is so unrealistic and utopian that we must assume that they will wake up tomorrow and Leonce will once again "come down" from this vision of a utopian world and reinstate the traditional, official order of things, but this return to the status quo is elided.

Leonce follows this melancholic line to the point where he sees that Lena is not pleased with his vision of marital bliss (HA 1: 133-134; 3.3). At this point Leonce reverts to his carnivalesque sense of the world, vowing to turn the kingdom of Popo into the land of Cockaigne (134). It seems to be either or with Leonce: either he reverts to the status quo or he escapes into the world of carnival. There is no responsible middle ground for Leonce. There is no means to articulate a responsible politics which can oppose the order of King Peter. Either Leonce must accept it and take it and

his role in it seriously, or he turns it on his head in a carnivalesque inversion.

At the point where Leonce is thinking about reverting to the role which was being prepared for him before his carnivalesque journey, it would seem that that role had been so thoroughly discredited that it would be impossible to return to it. Leonce himself completely undermines the credibility of courtly life, and Valerio finishes the job. What, then, are we to think of the possibility of returning to the status quo? Can this be done? Or are we to believe that Leonce's vision of Cockaigne will really be instituted by the new Minister of State, Valerio? Once again, we are provided with no middle ground. Either we expect Leonce to begin all over again from the beginning or we are to believe that Leonce and Valerio will instantiate the kingdom of Cockaigne.

Leonce never really appears able to make the leap to the realm of the carnivalesque. Even when he is outside of the confines of the kingdom of Popo we see that his understanding of the world and especially nature and women is unchanged. He experiences nature as a hall of mirrors which is a fragile illusion (HA 1: 118; 2.1). He is not at home in the expansiveness of nature as Valerio and Lena are. Leonce is fearful. He cannot allow himself the fanciful play and simple pleasures that he sees in Valerio, although he recognizes that there are such pleasures, as evidenced by his statement that "Der Kerl (Valerio) verursacht mir ganz

idyllische Empfindungen; ich könnte wieder mit dem Einfachsten anfangen, ich könnte Käs essen, Bier trinken, Tabak rauchen" (HA 1: 113; 1.3). Valerio's grotesque enjoyment of the sausage and wine that he has stolen from Leonce's kitchen awakens in Leonce a vague nostalgia for a simpler time, and he appears to want to attempt to recapture this feeling, but he never really does.

D. Function of the Character of Valerio

Valerio functions as a carnivalesque figure and uses the subversive power of the carnivalesque to his advantage. Valerio enacts a carnivalesque strategy in order to infiltrate and operate within the confines of courtly life in the kingdom of Popo. The carnivalesque strategy allows him to deftly maneuver within and between various discourse modes, never allowing himself to be limited to any one of them. By manipulating the evasive potential of carnivalesque modes of discourse, Valerio is able to successfully avoid being delimited by the powers that be (i.e., King Peter and his court), and he is able to secure a position as "Staatsminister" at the court of Leonce and Lena.

The fact that Büchner leaves the reader with Valerio's vision of the land of Cockaigne as the new order in the kingdom of Popo flies in the face of the traditional sequence of events in carnival. Carnival is circumscribed by spatial and temporal boundaries. Though the spatial boundaries are maintained--in that Valerio's decree will only be carried out

in the kingdom of Popo--the temporal limitations of carnival have been subverted. We are left with the question as to what will become of this vision of Cockaigne. Valerio is not yet Minister of State, and this is made clear because he states his plans in the future tense. Leonce appeared prepared to return to the status quo after coming down out of the carnivalesque consciousness, but when he saw Lena's disapproval of his vision of returning to the status quo, he quickly reverted to his carnivalesque vision and the world of eternal summer, festival time, or timelessness.

If we consider the traditional cultural pattern of carnival, we should expect the termination of carnival in this return to the status quo. That is, Lent should enter the scene and usher out the carnival season. But in Leonce und Lena this traditional pattern is subverted. Not only is the traditional pattern of carnival subverted, but also the traditional manifestation of the fool in literature is subverted: fooldom must come to an end or be circumscribed by traditional authority. The traditional return of the status quo is elided in Leonce und Lena. Not only does traditional authority not reassert itself, but Leonce und Lena goes so far as to depict Valerio as being victorious over King Peter. Valerio, the representative of the carnival world (dis)order, is victorious over King Peter, the representative of the serious, Lenten world order. There is a tension created by this violation of generic expectations.

Valerio's function is to depict an active response to a desperate and absurd situation. That is, Valerio is a depiction of a successful way of reacting to the unsatisfactory options offered to him in his world. Valerio does not passively accept the cards dealt to him by life, nor does he accept the status quo, but he does not go so far as to become an overt revolutionary; he is far to weak as an individual for such an action. To overtly oppose the established order would land him in prison, as we can see by his police pursuants. Though Valerio does not overtly condemn his world for its lack of opportunity for the common person, it is left for the reader to wonder what kind of society provides such limited and absurd options for its citizens.

Valerio serves a critical function in Leonce und Lena. The main thrust of this critic is summarized when Valerio states:

> ...Und zu diesen köstlichen Phantasieen bekommt man gute Suppe, gutes Fleisch, gutes Brod, ein gutes Bett und das Haar umsonst geschoren--im Narrenhaus nämlich--, während ich mit meiner gesunden Vernunft mich höchstens noch zur Beförderung der Reife auf einen Kirschbaum verdingen könnte, um--nun?--um? (HA 1: 107; 1.1)

Valerio makes this observation following his "Alexander der Große" fantasy. This passage depicts Valerio's understanding of the roles available to a person in his society. He portrays two main options: 1) to engage in fantasies about court life in the service of the nobility, for which one is rewarded with a comfortable life in the "madhouse" (i.e., at

the court); and 2) to operate on the basis of sound reason, which will only allow one to be in the service of promoting the ripeness of cherry trees. Valerio's vision exposes the inadequacy of the roles available to him in his world. Valerio cannot find a position in life where he can use his "sound reason" for any other purpose than the promotion of ripeness on cherry trees, which is an absurd application of his talents. It is because Valerio sees no serious role for himself in society that he resorts to playing the role of the first option: the role of the fool. Valerio resorts to this option for the explicit purpose of sustaining himself as a defender of the Fatherland, that is, to survive.

Valerio's carnivalesque strategy functions not only as a means of survival, but also as a limited critique of the socio-politico-economic conditions in the "Popo" monarchy. We are presented with a world where the only means of survival are deceit and subterfuge. Food is such a luxury in Reich Popo that the peasants are limited to merely smelling meat and Valerio must steal it or fantasize about it. Valerio makes it quite clear that he realizes the only means to achieve a decent lifestyle is to provide "fantasies" at the "Narrenhaus," that is, serve at the court of King Peter, and the soon-to-be King Leonce. We see a distinct contrast between the peasants' passivity toward their poverty and hunger and Valerio's activity. Whereas the peasants passively accept their miserable existence and fulfill their role as props for Leonce und Lena's wedding, Valerio actively

engages in obtaining a position within courtly life. The peasants are portrayed as passively accepting the reforming tendencies of the School Master, as evidenced by their mouthing the word "Vi Vat." It is interesting to contrast this vision of Lent with the vision of carnival portrayed through Valerio. But, as Valerio tells us, he does not attempt to achieve this position at the court by means of sound reason, but rather by means of presenting the nobility with a reflection of what they want to see. In return for his provision of these self-indulgent fantasies, Valerio will be fed and clothed and receive a bed to sleep on, as well as good haircuts. But at what cost?

E. Limitations of Valerio's Carnivalesque Strategy

In functioning within the role of the intelligent fool, Valerio does not offer the reader a serious, positive alternative to the monarchical system within which he is operating. It seems that Valerio is ready to assume whichever identity fits the moment. He is not interested in asserting a firm position or claiming a stable identity. Valerio is only interested in achieving his goal of finding a place at the "Narrenhaus." By refusing to be identified and categorized, Valerio succeeds in his attempt to become a "Staatsminister".

The negativity of Valerio's strategy is a function of the carnivalesque. Carnival functions within specific spatial and temporal boundaries; if one does not want to

suffer the sanctions of overstepping the bounds of accepted behavior, one must remain within those boundaries. Carnival and carnivalized literature offer us a vision of a world turned upside down, but this "verkehrte Welt" is essentially sanctioned at some level by the real-world powers. Similarly, if an author wants to publish a literary work--and this is especially true of drama, due to the public nature of the stage--s/he must consider the restrictions which are placed on the publication of literature. In effect, the literature s/he produces must be sanctioned by the ruling powers. Carnival and carnivalized literature, as public forms of discourse, must function within the bounds of society; as such they are susceptible to sanction and censure.

With the censorial restrictions placed on public forms of discourse in the Restoration era in mind, we can better understand the function and limitations of Valerio's carnivalesque strategy. On several occasions Valerio refers to the limitations placed on him by society. For example in his "läufiger Lebenslauf" discussion (HA 1: 140-41; fragment). Aside from the possible biographical references to Büchner's own exile, it is obvious from this statement that the character of Valerio has been living a life on the run, or at least we know that he is not enjoying the life of a prominent citizen from Valeriental. He is fleeing a life-threatening situation, and this life on the run is causing him ill health.

This condition motivates Valerio to acquire a ministerial position at the court, thus his relationship with Leonce. Furthermore, the desire to sustain himself as a defender of the Fatherland (i.e., to survive) limits Valerio's criticism; if Valerio wants to receive a position as a minister of Leonce's court, any critique he voices will have to be in a disguised form. The carnivalesque functions as this disguise, but the carnivalesque is a limited form of critique, and as a result Leonce und Lena is limited in the extent to which it openly criticizes.

Valerio's critique is ambivalent and does not leave the reader with a clearly defined positive alternative to the status quo. We see Valerio succeed in his goal of sustaining himself as a fighter for the Fatherland, but the means used to achieve this end are vague and ambivalent. At the end of Leonce und Lena we are left with a vision of Cocaigne as the order (or disorder, as the case may be) Leonce and Valerio will instantiate in the kingdom of Popo. This attempt to institutionalize carnival as the daily way of life cannot last. Carnival exists within well-defined chronotopic (spatial and temporal) boundaries, and the order which sanctions the instantiation of carnival always frames the occurrence of carnival. The crowning of the carnival king is always followed by an uncrowning. In short, carnival is always a temporary and unofficial way of viewing the world, and any attempt to make it the official order is doomed to fail. Carnival is always based on disorder; it is an

ambivalent critique of the status quo based on the chaotic inversion of the established order. While it may serve limited goals and provide a certain critical function, carnival is not a model for institutional formation. In this light, the final vision of Cockaigne provided by Leonce and Valerio is doomed to fail. We are left wondering if Leonce will decide to start things all over from the beginning, i.e., return to the status quo, or if he will attempt to retain the carnivalesque atmosphere prompted by his relationships with Valerio and Lena. The reader is left to sort this out, but if one is to interpret the dramatic instantiation of carnivalesque elements in a manner consistent with actual instantiations of festivals and carnival, the uncrowning must follow the crowning. Consistent with this interpretation would be the uncrowning of Valerio as Leonce's Abbot of Misrule (or "Staatsminister" as the case may be) and the return the the order that existed before Leonce's carnivalesque journey.

Even though the traditional pattern of carnival would lead us to the conclusion that Valerio's attempt to institutionalize carnival is probably doomed to fail, the fact that the drama ends without articulating this failure leaves the reader with the proposed instantiation of a carnivalized order in the kingdom of Popo. Though it seems that Valerio and Leonce have thoroughly undermined the available roles provided them by their world, this critique has only been conducted within the bounds of the

carnivalesque. That is, we do not see a serious polemic in this drama, in which the failures of the Popo culture are enumerated in a clear and concise manner. Valerio cannot do this, because his entire project depends on his maintenance of the carnivalesque. Even if he wanted to step out of his carnivalesque role, in order to level a polemic against this society that he has parodied and ambivalently criticized, he could not do so. He can take off his carnivalesque mask only at the risk of being apprehended by the authorities, and he seems determined not to let this happen. Given this state of affairs, Valerio cannot offer the reader a clear-cut polemic against this society. This is the limitation placed on him by his assumption of the carnivalesque role. In order to carry out his strategy and achieve his goals, he must renounce any desire to explicitly critique society.

Part IV

CONCLUSION

In answer to the question "Why read Leonce und Lena through a Bakhtinian Lens?", I will refer to an article by Robert Stamm where he discusses what culture studies can learn from Bakhtin. Stamm argues that Bakhtin offers a very complex understanding of the relationship between language and society and that this understanding offers culture studies another model for comprehending strategies of confrontation. That is, Bakhtinian theory offers the critic of cultural artifacts tools for analyzing the complex relationships between the cultural artifact and the culture in which that artifact was produced and received. In the case of carnivalized literature, we have a cultural artifact that articulates a critique that does not correspond to any polemical form of criticism. If the critic is not aware of the cultural tradition to which this carnivalesque artifact is constantly referring, then s/he will most likely not be able to appreciate the full force of this critique. Though critique may not satisfy the requirements of a fully articulated polemic, the socio-cultural criticism is nonetheless there in a different form, and, according to

Stamm, it behoves those of us interested in the socio-cultural aspects of literature to investigate this other form of criticism that Bakhtin has elaborated in his studies.

The main point in this thesis is that the character of Valerio functions as a socio-cultural critique, but if one is seeking a critique in the form of a polemical diatribe, or even in any explicitness whatsoever, one will be hard pressed to find it in Leonce und Lena. The critique articulated in Leonce und Lena is carnivalesque and therefore ambivalent. The drama consistently undermines all seriousness. Existence is problematized to its core, but no serious answers are given to the problems that arise. The main function of Valerio's character is the problematization of the order of things. Because Valerio's character is maintained in its centrality throughout the drama, and he is allowed to utter the final words in the drama, the reader is left with this unfinished problematization of existence. No concrete answers are given. The entire drama is circumscribed by a carnivalesque atmosphere. The reader is left to wonder what is the meaning of this nonsense, and that is precisely the point of this drama. In a world that does not make any sense, it is senseless to look for an absolutely rational order of things, according to which one can guide her/his actions and maintain any hope of success. Though Valerio is not allowed to openly and explicitly criticize his world, this does not mean that a critique is not carried out through his actions and statements. But in order for the reader to

appreciate this criticism it must be located in the intertext. Bakhtinian theory not only provides the methodology for linking Leonce und Lena with this critical intertext, but also articulates the intertext that is most relevant to this drama: carnival and carnivalized literature.

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