ENCOUNTERING HEINRICH VON KLEIST IN THE WORKS OF JOHN
BANVILLE AND DAVID CONSTANTINE

by

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Abstract

This thesis examines the presence of German author Heinrich von Kleist (1777-1811) in the works of the anglophone authors John Banville (b. 1945) and David Constantine (b. 1944). Presenting analysis of translations, adaptations and works from the wider oeuvres of the English-speaking authors, the thesis identifies aspects of theme and style in their texts that have arguably been influenced by their engagement with Kleist. Additional insight is provided by an interview with each anglophone author. The analysis allows the thesis to explore the wide-ranging implications of Kleist's presence in the oeuvres of Banville and Constantine. In this way the thesis aims to demonstrate that, with regard to Banville and Constantine, Kleist has a more significant presence in the anglophone literary scene than may have been widely acknowledged. Finally, the thesis discusses the disparate attitudes demonstrated by Banville and Constantine towards translation and intertextuality.

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Definitions and Abbreviations

For ease of reading I will refer to Banville's and Constantine's target texts of Kleist's texts as texts written by the name of the translator or adapter.

Constantine's published collection of his own translations of Kleist - *Heinrich von Kleist: Selected Writings. Translated and Edited by David Constantine* (1997) - will typically be referred to as the *Selected Writings* throughout.

1. INTRODUCTION: WHY ADAPT KLEIST?

I recently encountered Heinrich von Kleist in the most unexpected place: plastered over a billboard on the colourful streets of Shoreditch, East London. Almost literally bumping into the nineteenth-century German author, my gaze met his 1808 portrait, painted by Anton Graff, which stood, ten feet tall, next to the pedestrian crossing at a busy roundabout. Even with bright-red laser beams obscuring his eyes, the figure in the portrait was instantly recognisable - to me, at least, but not, unsurprisingly, to my walking companion, who enquired why I had come to a sudden stop and was pointing up in dumb astonishment. Nor, I would speculate, to London's speed-walking pedestrians, for whom I was now creating something of a stationary hazard as I excitedly rooted around for my camera.

The billboard was an advertisement for a newly published novel: *Red Pill* (2020), by the British author Hari Kunzru (b. 1969). How Kleist came to be the inspiration for that particular writer is not the subject of the following study, but the encounter did provide further evidence for its central thesis: that Kleist is indeed present in, and influential on, the anglophone literary scene, even if he may not be a household name amongst its readers.

It may be widely believed that Kleist has largely been forgotten in the wider anglophone literary world. Certainly, many scholars and authors have suggested this; throughout the following thesis, there will be numerous examples of such statements bemoaning his lack of general recognition. In this thesis I will set out to demonstrate that Kleist is more prevalent on the English-speaking literary scene than one might

think. Through analysis of the works of two prominent author-translators - John Banville and David Constantine - I will map out a small section of the vast network of anglophone texts that surround Kleist. These two authors have translated or adapted Kleist's texts, and both acknowledge a profound debt to him. In the following chapters I will delve into their oeuvres and uncover Kleistian connections in texts that might - at first glance - appear to have nothing to do with the German author. I cast a wide, but by no means arbitrary, net, to explore why these authors have adapted Kleist, and what the effects have been. Encounters with Kleist abound.

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The works of Heinrich von Kleist (1777-1811) make for particularly fascinating source material for researchers of translation and adaptation. The highly ambiguous nature of his writing is especially alluring to the translating or adapting author, since his texts suggest an abundance of possible responses. While adaptations of Kleist are by no means ubiquitous on anglophone bookshelves, there are far too many to analyse in any depth in one thesis. The texts of John Banville and David Constantine have been chosen for discussion in this thesis for a myriad of reasons. Perhaps the most compelling is this: both deeply admire Kleist's writing. Joining me on a cold January evening for a glass of wine in a Dublin bar, Banville declared: 'I feel an absolute affinity with Kleist. [...] Kleist would be one of my heroes. I don't have many. But he would be one of them' (appendix A). Eleven months later, sipping tea at a museum café in Oxford, Constantine told me that Kleist was 'a writer we need now', saying that 'a writer as good as Kleist is a continual surprise' and concluding: 'I shall always read him' (appendix B). As a researcher who has devoted her academic life to Kleist, I

found such statements to be highly palatable, and reflective of the energy and time the two authors have devoted during their careers to engaging with Kleist's texts.

There are, however, many additional motivations for believing that analysis of the texts of these two writers will be meaningful. Both Banville and Constantine are well known and prolific, having written extensively outside of the target texts. This provides plentiful material within which to situate their translation/adaptation work, including their wider oeuvres and the many interviews each has given throughout his career. Banville is from Ireland and Constantine is English, providing a varied geographical range through which to consider the context of each target text; on the other hand, their target texts have been produced in roughly the same time period, providing a certain degree of common ground. Both have adapted (some of) the plays, with Constantine also producing target texts based on the stories, providing an opportunity to compare target texts based on the same source text, but also to discuss how the authors have chosen different source texts to adapt and their reasons for these choices. Banville's wider work is typically politically disengaged, whilst Constantine is very politically minded, and yet Banville has transferred the plays into new, politically charged settings, whilst Constantine has not. Lastly, Banville appears to consider his target texts to have a high degree of autonomy in relation to the source texts, whilst Constantine sees part of the purpose of a translation to be service to a source text, therefore eroding that autonomy, at least to some extent. In this way, examination of statements they have made on intertextuality and translation, combined with analysis of the target texts, will add to the current debate in Translation Studies around the position of the translator.

John Banville (b. 1945) is an Irish author whose books have won numerous awards, including the 2005 Booker Prize for his novel *The Sea* (2005). Banville has published four Kleist target texts - three plays and one novel - explicitly adapted from Kleist's plays (although references to Kleist abound throughout much of his oeuvre). These texts are: *The Broken Jug* (1994), a version of Kleist's *Der zerbrochne Krug* (1811)*; God's Gift* (2000), a version of Kleist's *Amphitryon* (1807); *Love in the Wars* (2005), a version of Kleist's *Penthesilea* (1808); and *The Infinities* (2009), a novel, which takes inspiration from *Amphitryon*.

For three of these target texts Banville has changed the setting of the source texts to an Irish setting, bringing Kleist's writing into the realm of the 1798 Irish rebellion, and the 1846 Great Famine. My thesis will explore the impact of these choices, surprising for a writer whose works have been described as 'decisively fictional, non-realistic' (McMinn 1999:6), and existing in 'an independent republic of fiction' (ibid.:5). I also examine Banville's problematising of conventional Irish-English perspectives, his preoccupation with the self and the other, and the individual and institutional nature of crime and corruption within his works.

David Constantine (b. 1944) is a British translator, academic, poet and short-story writer. A lecturer in German at Durham University and Oxford University for much of his career, he has won several awards for his short stories, poetry and translations. Constantine has translated a number of Kleist texts (plays, stories, essays and anecdotes), stating that Kleist is one of the 'writers we cannot do without' in the English language (1997:xxvii). The translations are collected in his publication *Heinrich von Kleist: Selected Writings* (1997). He has made many statements on the value of translation for the target language, and the new literary forms that come into a

language from translation, based on his adoption of the views on translation espoused during the German Romantic period. This thesis will explore how those views and his engagement with Kleist emerge across his oeuvre, in terms of both theme and syntax. The discussion will also focus on the prevalence of emblems and paradoxes within his works, partly as a result, I will argue, of his deep familiarity with Kleist's texts.

Thesis structure

The remainder of this chapter will discuss existing scholarship regarding Kleist's legacy in the anglophone world. This will largely be focused upon the methodologies of the literature discussed.

Chapters 2 and 3 of this thesis provide close readings of extracts from two of the source texts - *Der zerbrochne Krug* and *Amphitryon* - along with the respective extracts from the target texts written by Banville and Constantine. These source texts are the only two of Kleist's texts that have been explicitly adapted by both Banville and Constantine. The objective of these chapters is to introduce the reader to the differences in style between Constantine and Banville, as well as to illuminate some of the key points of interest when analysing their engagements with Kleist: which themes are they particularly keen to draw out in his works? What are their responses to his peculiar German syntax? By quoting passages from the target texts, I aim to allow the reader to immerse him- or herself, at least partially, in the texts. However, it is not possible within the bounds of this thesis to provide comprehensive close-reading analysis of the entirety of the two target texts in Chapters 2 and 3, and these chapters will be relatively brief. Significant features of the texts will also be incorporated into broader analysis in later chapters.

Chapters 4 and 5 span the oeuvres of Banville and Constantine respectively, in order to identify thematic and stylistic strands across their works that, I will argue, can fruitfully be analysed as belonging to Kleist's legacy. The target texts discussed in these chapters will not necessarily have been labelled as Kleist translations or adaptations, either by the author or by critics; however I assert that a reader familiar with Kleist's writing will be struck by the connections that arise.

Chapter 6 draws together the analyses presented throughout the thesis, in order to compare and contrast the approaches taken by each anglophone author. In doing so, I demonstrate not only Kleist's profound influence upon the artistic endeavours of Banville and Constantine, but also the ways in which Kleist's concerns continue to remain acutely relevant to the world, and to literature, today.

The appendices contain transcripts of the interviews I conducted with John Banville, in January 2018, and with David Constantine, in December 2018. Each kindly gave me an hour or two of his time to discuss his engagement with Kleist. Material obtained via the interviews will be incorporated throughout the thesis as a means to document and explore each author's intentions and reflections. It is not, however, my intention to rely predominantly on authorial intention in my interpretations of the target texts, since just as every translator has his or her own interpretation of a source text, each reader has his or her own interpretation of a target text. I will discuss the methodology surrounding the issue of authority and agency later in this introduction, as well as throughout the thesis.

Literature Review and Methodology

Allan states that 'today the importance of Kleist's impact on the European cultural imagination is beyond dispute' (2013:5). I certainly agree with this declaration; yet it cannot necessarily be said that Kleist receives the recognition amongst the English-reading public that such a statement might suggest. The playwright and director Neil Bartlett, discussing his 2002 translation and production of *Prinz Friedrich von Homburg,* notes the rarity of Kleist's plays on the British stage, opining that 'no British audience comes to see a play by Kleist with any expectations of his style' (2002). Reeve, reviewing Kleist's (lack of) popularity outside of Germany, comments: 'Because of the unique nature of his poetic idiom, a disjointed, often alienating syntax that mirrors the disharmonious nature of his world, his dramas have been largely restricted to German-speaking playhouses' (1993:188-189). In *Vom Sonderling zum Klassiker*, a 1990 review of British Kleist reception from 1828 to 1928, Howard seems more optimistic, identifying a growth of Kleist's popularity in English-speaking circles, with the German author deemed to be initially a 'misfit' subject only to the occasional scholarly enquiry, and later a 'classic' considered to be sufficiently part of the canon that he was studied on a much larger scale by school and university students (Howard 1990:179). It is important to note, however, that Howard's study focuses on scholarly engagement with Kleist, rather than the number and prominence of adaptations of his works. Additionally, much has changed since 1928. Ever-decreasing numbers of students taking modern languages in higher education (see Bell et al. 2003), and the decreasing role of literature within the typical modern languages education, can reasonably be assumed to have significant consequences for Kleist's recognition by anglophone readers. What, then, is Kleist's impact on today's anglophone cultural

imagination, and how has this impact been felt by the writers who have engaged with him in recent decades?

The blurb of High and Clark, *Heinrich von Kleist: Artistic and Political Legacies* (2013) states that Kleist has been regarded by the thinkers and artists that have come after him as a writer 'whose relevance requires neither theoretical introduction nor literary-historical justification'. This is consistent with Banville's and Constantine's views on Kleist: both consider him to be a highly "relevant" writer, without wishing to tie their adaptation of his works to any particular "relevant" issue of the day. Banville states, in my interview with him (appendix A), that he hates the word 'relevance' ('I run a mile when I hear it'; 'I don't make comments'). Interestingly, however, he did use this same word without prompting when we discussed *Penthesilea* ('It's as relevant today as it was in Kleist's time'), and his transposition of the settings of Kleist's plays to politically charged periods of Irish history would seem to put this view into question. Constantine's perspective is that the relevance of a foreign or older text to our current context is decidedly not something he actively considers when translating, but that 'Great works reach out of their own time and touch us now', and that Kleist's 'striv[ing] to make sense, to hold a world together' is a 'very modern enterprise' (appendix B). He briefly links Kleist's writing - as well as literature and translation in general - to truth in the age of 'alternative facts', and to ecological thinking and climate change (ibid.). For both writers, then, Kleist's worldview, as expressed through the content and form of his texts, is what has driven their desire to engage with him, rather than any particular current political or historical issue, and this worldview continues to be relevant to our world today.

This might seem to be a very straightforward matter that needs little clarification, but I would like briefly to contrast this approach with other writers who have translated or adapted Kleist with more specific "comments" in mind, as Banville would put it. I have discussed elsewhere the extent to which British playwrights Neil Bartlett and Dennis Kelly were conscious of the post-9/11 production contexts of their translations of Kleist's *Prinz Friedrich von Homburg*, published in 2002 and 2010 respectively, and how both authors explicitly referenced this context with regard to the themes of violence and subordination expressed in *Homburg*, with Kelly in particular adding references to Nazi Germany throughout his target text as a shorthand for a dystopian authoritarian state (Tatlow 2016). Wilson (2000) details a selection of the feminist texts and interpretations that have been produced in response to Kleist's *Penthesilea*, with particular focus on Christa Wolf. I by no means wish to suggest that such approaches negate the ambiguity of the source texts; I merely wish to highlight that writers translating or adapting Kleist find themselves on a broad spectrum of possible approaches that range from the very specifically situated to the vague.

That Kleist's work is particularly suited to this spectrum of different approaches is supported by the common assertion that Kleist's continuing relevance is in no small part due to the ambiguity of his texts, which has allowed artists of various disparate worldviews to take inspiration from them (see Allan 2013:8). This quality of Kleist's writing allows a translator or adapter a myriad of routes through their artistic journey: while some might adapt Kleist due to particular themes or interpretations they inherit *from* the ambiguity, some adapt him merely because of this ambiguity itself. The radical nature of his legacy has been noted by many critics. In the introduction to *Heinrich von Kleist: Artistic and Political Legacies*, High says of Kleist: 'he, perhaps

better than any other thinker, marks the beginning of a new, modern intellectual and literary bloodline' (2013:20). High identifies Kleist's legacy as concerning 'the most modern matters of fatal urgency' (2013:21), and 'the often ruinous quest to progress' (ibid.), and predicts that Kleist's enduring legacy is founded on matters which 'likely will continue to matter as long as individuals despair at the insight into their own inability to conclude what might happen next, based on the fragmented knowledge of what has happened thus far; and as long as the public delights in the algebra of disorientation, and artists calculate how to disorient audiences' (2013:22). This sense of disorientation will be apparent in the works and mindsets of Banville and Constantine. Like many critics before him, Allan attributes Kleist's enduring appeal to the fact that both his works and his biography present us with 'an interpretative puzzle' that has allowed proponents of contradicting philosophies to find inspiration in his work (2013:8). The following sections of this chapter will discuss how the methodologies employed by critical scholars in this field grapple with the challenge of analysing literary responses to the interpretative puzzle.

Heinrich von Kleist: Artistic and Political Legacies, edited by High and Clark and published in 2013, shortly after the two-hundredth anniversary of Kleist's suicide, is a collection of essays which includes chapters regarding the anglophone reception of his work. In his review of the volume, Howe praises the breadth of methodologies and perspectives of the essays, variously focusing as they do on influence, intertextuality, 'transformations and reworkings' and 'questions of identification and self-identification' (2015:591). This allows for a 'fresh outlook' and a 'profitable contribution to Kleist scholarship' (2015:591-2). In this thesis, through encompassing a

broad range of target texts by Banville and Constantine, I hope to contribute a similarly fresh perspective.

As an example of an approach that I find to be especially useful for my own analysis, I will discuss Dupree's analysis of Ian McEwan's *Atonement* as a Kleistian text, which she conducts specifically with regard to the significant symbolic use of a broken vessel, as in *Der zerbrochne Krug*. Dupree acknowledges that McEwan has not listed Kleist as an influence for his novel, and she highlights other sources of influence from which McEwan most likely took inspiration for the broken vessel at the novel's centre. Dupree's methodology is to examine the 'tropes, ethical and aesthetic stances, structures of meaning-making and rhetorical gestures' that connect the texts (2013:223). Despite the lack of any evidence that the connection between Kleist and McEwan is intentional on the latter's part, Dupree argues that 'thinking of McEwan's text as Kleistian can be productive insofar as it forces us to move beyond nationalistic and paternalistic notions of influence towards a more global reading of intertextuality' (2013:223). Dupree usefully identifies the ways by which, in both novels, the motif of the broken jug suggests fragmentation of history, authority and of narrative interpretation. Dupree notes how McEwan's text centres, in both form and theme, on its protagonist's varying narratives regarding the moment of the fragmentation, which she - the protagonist, Briony - self-consciously revises as the novel progresses; Dupree then goes on to compare this aspect of McEwan's novel with Kleist's text to highlight the fragmented and various 'explanatory narratives' and interpretations present in *Krug*. She convincingly highlights the similarity between the texts regarding modes of perception ('weil [die Augen] ihren Pflicht getan' (*Krug*), 'The truth instructed her eyes' (*Atonement*)) (2013:236-7). She links *Atonement* with 'Über das

Marionettentheater', in that Briony attempts to get into Paradise via the back door by reconciling 'perception and belief' and transcending reality by turning her personal history into a work of art, so that she and her family will 'exist only as [her] inventions' (2013:238). This then allows her to make the link that both Judge Adam and Briony (as the "God novelist" or creator of her own narrative) are sitting in judgement upon themselves. The parallels that Dupree draws between the two texts, and the conclusions she derives, prove that productive insights may be made into both source and target texts even when discussing works that might seem to be unrelated. In many cases in the following thesis, I will adopt a similar approach to Dupree, and indeed, I will make the case for another possible descendant of *Der zerbrochne Krug*: Banville's 2020 novel *Snow*.

Critics can be sceptical regarding the efficacy of such connections, and the scholarly identification thereof, in effecting Kleist's continuing relevance to the modern reader, or in expanding current understanding of Kleist's texts. Reviewing *Heinrich von Kleist: Artistic and Political Legacies*, Kanzog poses the following question:

> Dorothea von Mücke versteht Philip Pullmans Jugendroman *The Golden Compass* (1995) als „Weiter- oder Umschrift des *Marionettentheater*-Aufsatzes" [...]. Doch reichen minimale Anspielungen, wie der „Fechtkampf mit dem Bären" aus, um den Kleist-Leser zu einer „möglichen Neulektüre Kleists" [...] zu veranlassen? (2015:211)

The question is rhetorical, and goes unanswered, yet clearly expresses doubt. In this thesis I aim to challenge such scepticism by incorporating a wide range of texts, by Kleist and by Banville and Constantine, as well as by consulting paratextual material. By analysing across the oeuvres of the anglophone authors, whilst also selecting certain texts for close readings, I will provide evidence to argue that Kleist has influenced each

writer's artistic sensibility as a whole, thus providing original insight into both Kleist's writing and the target texts.

The texts under discussion in the following section of literature review have a narrower focus, in that they concentrate on Kleist specifically in anglophone translation (and theatre productions of those translations).[1] Scholarship in this field is limited in both scope and insight. Lack of a generally accepted methodology in case-study research often results in criticism that it tells us very little outside of the narrow confines of the study's immediate subject (see Saldanha and O'Brien 2013:210-11). In the instance of Kleist in anglophone translation, the critical literature under review typically prioritises fidelity to the "original" source text, even in cases where the author has been careful to state that his or her aim is otherwise. This necessarily leads the author into discussing target texts purely according to long-established interpretations of the source text.

A substantial close-reading analysis of Kleist in anglophone translation is Eydt-Beebe's unpublished thesis *Reception and Translation: Heinrich von Kleist's 'Der zerbrochne Krug' in English Translations* (2002). Eydt-Beebe surveys chronologically, and in discrete chapters, the fourteen target texts available to her. Eydt-Beebe's methodology, as she presents it in her introduction, appears to have similarities to my own proposed approach, in that her aim is to be not evaluative but descriptive, and to avoid prioritising the source text over the target text (2002:5-6). However, Eydt-Beebe's study is not entirely successful in this regard, partly due to its problematic

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[1] Some of the material from this section has been adapted according to University Regulations from my 2016 MRes thesis, which analysed two English translations of Kleist's *Prinz Friedrich von Homburg* (Tatlow 2016).

language, and partly because of her tendency to fit her interpretations of each target text onto a pre-existing interpretation of the source text.

Eydt-Beebe's claim is that by avoiding comparative analysis of the target texts by means of selecting key passages from the source texts, she maintains equality of status between the source text and target text (2002:6). Thus her analysis of each target text largely consists of recording microstructural shifts from the source text – this sees her refer to the source text constantly, very rarely exploring each target text on its own terms. Whilst the resulting research is rigorous, it conveys little outside of the limits of each target text, particularly since, with so many target texts under consideration, Eydt-Beebe does not, or rather cannot, devote much space either to penetrating investigation of the context of production of each target text, or to comparisons across the target texts. The identification of isolated examples of microstructural shifts does relatively little to give the reader a good sense of a target text's overall effect; this is a methodological disadvantage that I aim to avoid by quoting extracts from the source texts and target texts at greater length in Chapters 2 and 3. Eydt-Beebe's discussion of Bentley's 'variation' on Kleist's drama *Der zerbrochne Krug - Concord* (1981) - is a striking example of the shallowness of this approach. Eydt-Beebe notes how Bentley sees a 'great writer [as] a challenge' who demands response, not imitation (Bentley quoted in Eydt-Beebe 2002:182). Therefore, perhaps unsurprisingly, Bentley's target text could not be conventionally described as "faithful", insofar as Bentley moves the setting from seventeenth-century Holland to Massachusetts, United States, in 'the early days of the Republic'. Eydt-Beebe also acknowledges, prompted by Bentley's preface, that Bentley presents an interpretation of the character of Eve as 'modern […] mit feministischen Grundzügen' (Eydt-Beebe 2002:190). With such a "free" response to

the source text under discussion, one might expect Eydt-Beebe's presentation of Bentley's text to engage in analysis of the target text on its own terms, at least to some extent, but Eydt-Beebe barely discusses the effect of the change in setting. The relevance of the context of the target text's production – by a prolific playwright, theatre critic and translator in the United States of the 1980s – to its change of setting and feminist leanings is not explored. The methodology of my thesis will differ from that of Eydt-Beebe insofar as I shall consider such aspects of the target texts in order to reach conclusions that can be speculatively applied outside of the immediate text in question, conclusions which might tell us something about Kleist, or about the target culture in which the text was produced.

The wording of Eydt-Beebe's analysis leads to similar problems. Eydt-Beebe identifies the pitfalls of describing the source text as the 'Original', suggesting that it creates the impression of the source text's supremacy (2002:6). Eydt-Beebe does, however, then go on to refer to the source text as the 'Original' in her later discussion of text selection (2002:42), and, indeed, her perspective throughout appears to be one which sees the source text very much as the 'Original'. Given that she has described her study as primarily descriptive, evaluative terms appear frequently, which leads to the sense of translation as a process of inevitable loss, and therefore not something by which we can hope to gain new insight outside of the narrow confines of whether or not Kleist is being "adequately" represented. This will be a common occurrence throughout several of the texts discussed in this literature review, and I am particularly keen to avoid, whether intentionally or unintentionally, adopting such a stance in my thesis.

An earlier study which has similar strengths and weaknesses is Wedekind's thesis *'Die Verlobung in St. Domingo': Kleist's Novelle in Translation and as a Basis*

for Opera and Drama (1974), which examines target texts that have been written in response to Kleist's 'Die Verlobung in St. Domingo' (1811).

Wedekind identifies the major problem with the concept that a translator should aim to convey the 'general effect' of the source text: namely, who has the authority to decide what the 'general effect' is and to judge whether or not a certain translation has conveyed it (Wedekind 1974:110)? Nevertheless, Wedekind makes it clear that she does intend to judge the quality of the translations and take a source-text-oriented, evaluative approach. Wedekind provides detailed textual analysis of Kleist's text to identify occasions where the translator has, she thinks, 'mistranslated'. She frequently usefully extends her remarks beyond the specific to demonstrate why a seemingly small shift might be a significant deviation from the source text. Particularly of interest is her examination of syntactical structures to demonstrate how the translators do (or do not) emulate the particularly Kleistian, long, dense sentences (1974:119-20). Wedekind also comments to some extent on the surrounding context of the target texts: for example, her study of Körner's German-language adaptation of *Verlobung - Toni -* ascribes many of the changes from source text to target text to the personal life and ambitions of the adapter and as concessions to the moral standards of the time (1974:163-4).

Wedekind's detailed literary analysis is convincing, despite the fact that it does typically set fidelity as its benchmark; what is less satisfactory is that she does not pursue the lines of enquiry that she raises. When examining a 1957 opera version of *Verlobung*, for example, Wedekind states that the composer and librettist seems, from his own writing about the work, to have placed more emphasis on the real-world racial setting than Kleist (1974:190). She does not, however, go on to explore why this might be the case, or the position that this text might occupy within the librettist's wider

oeuvre or cultural context. In this respect Wedekind's findings are, like those of Eydt-Beebe, specific only to the particular text in question.

Further studies of Kleist in anglophone translation or theatre production are also characterised by a fidelity-based perspective. In *Kleist on Stage*, Reeve sensibly questions the possibility of ever 'honour[ing] the author's original intent', asking: 'Who can really determine the aim of a playwright as notoriously difficult and ambiguous as Kleist?' (1993:6). Nevertheless, he also states: 'In my judgement, the director has complete freedom with the play, *provided that he/she generally respects the text*' (1993:4, my emphasis), defining a general respect for the text as the avoidance of 'gimmicks' and a demonstration of 'faith in Kleist's challenging but beautiful verse and in his talent as a writer for the theatre' (1993:4). Throughout the monograph, Reeve mentions that this or that production 'endeavoured to do justice to the text' (e.g. 1993:168), but it is not clear exactly what is meant by this.

A 1981 article provides a survey of the reviews of two American productions of Kleist's plays, in order to gauge US reception of Kleist. Of one reviewer, the authors state: '[the reviewer] proceeds to demonstrate one of the assumptions of our essay: that people unfamiliar with Kleist are going to form an image of him based on these new productions, and that the image may be distorted' (Gelus and Crowley 1981:471). The quasi pearl-clutching stance demonstrated here is typical of the literature under review, and limits the ability of the article to propose new insight into the works discussed.

A more recent study that provides useful material for my own is Göbels' thesis *The German Classics on the British Stage: The Reception of Goethe, Schiller and Kleist since 1945* (2008). Göbels states that her study is a response to the call found in Howard (1990) for reception studies to take account of historical context (Göbels

2008:11). She situates the British reception of the so-called German classics, Goethe, Schiller, and Kleist, within the British habitus, which she defines, following Bourdieu, as the 'unwritten laws and rules of social and cultural behaviour' (2008:17). Rejecting as 'an oversimplification' the idea that German literature might have struggled to gain a foothold on the British stage because of 'post-war resentment' (2008:6), Göbels instead describes fundamental differences between the British and German theatre habitus, whereby the former, characterised by humorous and psychologically driven drama, is an uneasy home for the latter, which is typically considered to be more intellectually driven. The effects of this perceived dichotomy will be seen in this thesis' discussion of Banville's adaptations of Kleist's plays (albeit with regard to the Irish habitus, rather than the British).

Although it is not the focus of this literature review, I will briefly mention here a useful piece of insight from scholarship on Kleist in non-anglophone countries. Richardson's monograph *Kleist in France* posits the concept of the source author's 'usefulness, the extent to which he is, in a sense, needed in another country - a use or need determined, in turn, by the extent to which his work fits into the artistic and intellectual currents coming to fore in a country at a given time' (1962:3). Ugrinsky's thesis *Kleist in Russia* quotes Busch who says, of Kleist reception, we have to consider primarily not 'Was hat der Dichter uns in unserer Zeit zu sagen?' but the much more important question 'Was wünschen wir in unserer Zeit vom Dichter zu hören?' in analysing literary fate' (Ugrinsky 1981:13 on Busch 1980). This seems to me to be a particularly apt question to ask of Kleist, whose works have often been said to be ahead of his time, and reflects the stances of Banville and Constantine as described above.

Analysis which takes a target-culture-oriented perspective, as my thesis will, should contribute to answering this question.

Review of the studies mentioned above suggests that there is much left to be said with regard to non-German-speaking Kleist reception. The section of critical literature on this subject that focuses on close readings of target texts, chief among them being Eydt-Beebe (2002), typically provides a survey, within its remit, of *what* has been done, but does not explore *why* it has been done. It briefly introduces the cultural context into which a target text emerges, but does not engage in any depth with the ways in which this might have particularly affected a translator's choices. Related to the lack of attention given to the target culture is the impression given in such literature that the aim, even if this is not stated, of the study is to judge whether or not the translators have managed to convey the "authentic" Kleist, and to fit each target text into an established interpretation of the source text, rather than allowing, so to speak, each target text to forge its own path. This leads to discussion which insidiously presents translation as a process of inevitable loss.

Other critical literature on Kleist's legacy in non-German-speaking countries, such as Reeve (1993) and Howard (1990), is primarily based on considerations of context, and remains firmly within the field of reception studies, with scant attention given to literary analysis. In these studies, the authors dedicate substantial space to suggesting why Kleist might have been popular at certain times. These suggestions are not only interesting in themselves; they also have potential application outside of their own immediate field in the sense that Kleist's reception might tell us something more broadly about the reception of German literature, or about developments on the global literary scene at that time, hence going some way to refute the charges of isolationism

brought against case-study research. However, in largely avoiding engagement with the actual body of the target texts, these studies can leave the reader with very little idea of the substance of the target texts themselves. My interest is in the target texts as pieces of writing, not solely as artefacts whose mere existence proves interest in Kleist at the time of their production. Despite my strong desire to avoid prioritising fidelity to the source text, a large part of what makes Kleist a culturally significant writer is his style. As Constantine states in his note on his own translations: 'Style – in Kleist's case pre-eminently his syntax – is that by which the meaning is engendered and brought home into the heart and mind of the reader' (Constantine 1997:xxvi). It seems to me that to avoid discussion of style, and instead to comment solely and in broad terms upon which works might have appealed thematically to a certain adapter at a certain time, is to choose not to pursue a fascinating and important line of enquiry.

What this thesis contributes to the existing literature on Kleist in translation is a midpoint between the various methodologies described above, with the aim of benefitting from their most fruitful aspects. I want to know why Banville and Constantine chose to adapt Kleist, and this necessitates considering the broader context of the target texts' production. I want to know how they went about it, and what the effect of their choices and influences have been on their oeuvres overall, and this necessitates close reading of the target texts. The most comprehensive method to propose answers to my research questions will involve research that is both deep and broad, detailed and expansive.

The final section of this literature review will survey the scholarship that focuses particularly on Banville's engagement with Kleist. To begin with the latter: the pool of material is small. Constantine's output has not been the subject of numerous

scholarly studies. The English-Studies scholar Deveson has written on Constantine, and his analysis of Constantine's oeuvre focuses particularly on the author's own conceptions of poetry, translation and the position of the writer - unsurprisingly, given the wealth of material Constantine has produced on the subject. In a 2010 article, Deveson notes that Constantine's work has not received the critical attention it deserves, outside of his fellow poets and critics (2010:65). Deveson has predominantly engaged with Constantine's writing with regard to the latter's translations of Hölderlin, an author who has inspired a substantial part of Constantine's translation and academic activity. Deveson notes Constantine's 'apparent preference for the "mature", characteristically hypotactic Hölderlin over the later [...] increasingly paratactic works' (2010:68); this observation supports Constantine's interest in Kleist, whose works are strikingly hypotactic. Deveson contrasts Constantine's translations of Hölderlin's poems with the earlier translations by Hamburger, identifying in Constantine's target texts 'a shift towards "concrete particularity"' (ibid.). The use of concrete images to explore abstractions is a noted feature of Constantine's works amongst reviewers, and will be discussed with relation to Kleist in Chapter 5. Deveson goes on to highlight the 'bleak urgency' of Constantine's early poems, stating that they 'would have us live in an often dangerously transitional present [...] in [a]"meantime"' (2010:71). This, I would argue, is reflective not only of Constantine's engagement with Hölderlin, but also of his engagement with Kleist. In the same vein, Constantine conceives of a 'pause', or a 'simultaneity', that exists in poetry, and, as a genre, in the short story (Constantine 2013), and I will investigate this concept with relation to Constantine's short stories, and Kleist's stories, in Chapter 5.

The analysis of Constantine's target texts in the following chapters will be also supplemented by material from reviews of his short stories and poems, which are plentiful, as well as his own commentaries on his work obtained from interviews and his non-fictional writing (for example, his 2013 monograph *Poetry: The Literary Agenda*).

Banville's writerly engagement with Kleist has received more scholarly attention, especially in recent years, showing an increase in interest not only in Banville's oeuvre, but particularly in Banville's admiration of Kleist. In an example of earlier Banville criticism, McMinn's monograph *The Supreme Fictions of John Banville* (1999:158-9), the Kleist target texts are relegated to a brief acknowledgement in the final chapter, entitled 'Two dramatic pieces': effectively a 'Miscellaneous' chapter, of which one half - two pages in length - records a reception history of Banville's 1994 Dublin production of *The Broken Jug*. In the following examples of Banville criticism, produced in the last few years, one or several chapters of the monographs are dedicated to Banville and Kleist, demonstrating an increasing awareness of Kleist's importance to the oeuvre. It is worth noting that these works are written from a Banville Studies perspective, rather than a German Studies or Translation Studies perspective.

Murphy's monograph *John Banville* (2018) contains a chapter on Banville's Kleist target texts, which lists explicit references to Kleist throughout Banville's oeuvre, such as the character of Cleave in *Eclipse*, who is performing as the title character in Kleist's play *Amphitryon* when he suffers an existential crisis, or mentions of puppets or marionettes that evoke Kleist's essay 'Über das Marionettentheater'. Murphy particularly focuses on Banville's *Amphitryon* target texts - *God's Gift* and *The*

Infinities - and does not devote equal space to *Love in the Wars* or *The Broken Jug*, nor to any more speculative references to Kleist's work within Banville's oeuvre. Murphy notes that in several ways Banville 'overwrites Kleist': 'In some respects, however, *God's Gift* both extends and reframes Kleist's *Amphitryon'* (2018:145-6). With relation to Banville's particular interest in *Amphitryon*, which the Irish writer has adapted into both a play - *God's Gift* - and a novel - *The Infinities* - Murphy discusses the generic differences, musing that the ontological confusion works particularly well on stage because of 'the self-consciousness generated' by performance (2018:150). He convincingly argues that, as a novel, *The Infinities* strives to achieve a similar effect through its multiple narrative levels, and he further explores the defamilarising tendencies and self-reflexive moments in Banville's other novels, with examples such as Banville's self-aware narrators, their frequent aestheticising of the action of their narratives, and the intratextuality within the oeuvre. These ideas are closely linked to Banville's interest in Kleist, which particularly focuses on questions of the construct of the self and self-consciousness. These are observations I have made throughout my doctoral research. Despite the similarity in aspects of our interpretations, I will make an original contribution to the argument by analysing in significantly greater detail the language of the texts themselves - including that of the source texts, which Murphy, who is not a German Studies scholar, does not discuss. I will also examine the effect of the changes in setting in Banville's target texts, a matter which is largely dismissed by Murphy, who states, regarding *God's Gift*: 'retention of Mercury and Jupiter inevitably universalizes the context' (2018:146). The effect of this change is, I argue, important, and not only within the confines of the target texts themselves: the changes in setting make the target texts somewhat incongruous within Banville's oeuvre, which is, as

discussed above, typically described as apolitical and existing almost outside of the "real" world. Thus while Murphy identifies points of similarity between Kleist's work and Banville's artistic endeavours, I will also explore the unexpected differences.

The final point to note with regard to Murphy's study is that he does not elaborate on the nature of the target texts *as* target texts. 'While *The Infinities* is not an adaptation', one of his statements begins, yet he proceeds no farther down this line of thought, not exploring why he does not consider it to be so (2018:150). As will be discussed in the conclusion to this chapter, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to determine what is or is not an adaptation; hence, I do not necessarily take umbrage against Murphy's statement. Nevertheless, I propose that, within an oeuvre as self-reflexive as Banville's, the very existence of target texts is in itself, interesting, and worth noting. This is especially true given that many of Banville's characters, throughout his works, resemble author-inserts, aware that they are creating the texts they are narrating. How might this relate to a text that has been 'based on' a different text, authored by another?

As the title suggests, Friberg-Harnesk's monograph, *Reading John Banville Through Jean Baudrillard* (2018), does not set out exclusively to explore Kleist's presence in Banville's works. In this study, Friberg-Harnesk applies the theory of social philosopher Baudrillard to Banville's oeuvre. Baudrillard's theory is one of 'orders of simulcra': reality is an illusion, and 'we cannot assume that "a sign could be exchanged for meaning and that something [such as a god] could guarantee this exchange" [...]. Baudrillard claimed [...] that the notion of "reality" is an illusion and [...] "the work of modern western Reason"' (Friberg-Harnesk quoting Baudrillard in Friberg-Harnesk 2018:10). For my current purposes, it will be useful to introduce succinctly the 'orders

of simulcra', which Friberg-Harnesk summarises by detailing Baudrillard's associated notion of the 'successive phases of the image'. These phases are: the image reflects profound reality; the image masks profound reality; the image masks the absence of a profound reality; the image has no relation to any reality and 'exists as pure simulacrum' (Friberg-Harnesk quoting Baudrillard in Friberg-Harnesk 2018:12). Within this theoretical framework, Friberg-Harnesk provides readings of Banville's *God's Gift*, *The Infinities* and *Love in the Wars*, with chapters on *Eclipse* and *The Untouchable* also making some reference to Kleist. *The Broken Jug* is not explored in any great detail in the monograph.

The publisher's website states that Friberg-Harnesk's study 'elucidates Banville's universe of radical uncertainty' by investigating the tendency in Banville's novels for 'copies to replace originals, connections to the real to be distorted or absent, and - in at least one novel - the entire human world to be an artful copy of a lost or non-extant original'. Friberg-Harnesk introduces the reader to Banville thus: 'John Banville's fiction tends to move in a territory of mercurial instability. Meaning is shrouded, shifting, or lacking, and appearances deceive' (2018:1). These statements could equally be applied to Kleist's texts, and it is no surprise, therefore, that Friberg-Harnesk's analysis focuses on Banville's Kleist target texts for several chapters.

Friberg-Harnesk's analysis is thorough, and illuminates many features of Banville's work. Its outlook may be understood to be a result of her background, since, as an English Studies and Irish Studies professor, she does not engage with Kleist's German texts directly at all. To a certain extent this is not only understandable, but also freeing: as discussed above, the benefits of taking a target text on its own terms are numerous. On the other hand, copious room remains to contribute to the debate by

means of a more rigorous engagement with Kleist's source texts themselves. An example of the disadvantages of a lower level of familiarity with the source texts occurs in Chapter 4, in which Friberg-Harnesk, analysing Banville's *God's Gift*, asserts that Banville has 'retained [Kleist's] focus' on the character of Alcmene (named Minna in Banville's target text), and her doubting of her ability to perceive reality. Friberg-Harnesk states that 'it is Minna's perplexity [...] that hold[s] the attention' (2018:100-1). This is Friberg-Harnesk's interpretation; however I would argue that familiarity with the source text, as well as with Banville's own comments on Kleist's play, would point rather towards the Amphitryon (/Ashburningham) or Jupiter characters being Banville's focus in this work, since their roles, in relation to Kleist's text, are expanded, and Minna's is somewhat diminished. Admittedly, it is not necessarily important to determine which character holds most attention in a text, since, as has been mentioned, each reader, critic or audience member will have his or her own subjective opinion on the matter. Nevertheless, greater familiarity with *Amphitryon*, as a basis against which to compare *God's Gift*, might serve as a useful prompt to investigate Banville's target text in this light, and, potentially, suggest the value of devoting more consideration to Ashburningham's or Jupiter's characterisation. It is a perspective of this nature that my thesis will contribute to the literature on Banville and Kleist.

Terminology

A review of the critical literature on Kleist in translation and adaptation emphasises the importance of constant reflection on one's own stance and terminology if one wishes to avoid lapsing into fidelity-oriented discussion. In some cases the authors of the studies examined above set out in explicit terms their intention to be descriptive rather than

evaluative, and to avoid setting the source text on an unattainable, high pedestal. Nevertheless, in both methodology and terminology, the studies repeatedly demonstrate the ease with which this can occur.

I will set out here my approach regarding terminology, which is a thorny issue. Throughout this thesis, I will refer to Kleist's texts as 'source texts', or 'source material'. Works by Banville or Constantine that have been translated or adapted from Kleist's works will be referred to as 'target texts'. However, Chapters 4 and 5, which explore the anglophone authors' wider oeuvres, discuss texts which would not typically be labelled as Kleist translations or adaptations, but which, I will argue, could be described as Kleistian, or as taking inspiration from Kleist as their source material, thereby making these texts 'target texts' at least to some degree.

To clarify the anglophone authors' own terminology: Constantine refers to source texts as 'originals' (see appendix B); Banville, as far as I have observed, does not adopt such terminology and simply refers to the source texts as Kleist's 'plays'. Constantine's *Selected Writings*, his collection of Kleist target texts, is titled 'Heinrich von Kleist: Selected Writings. Edited and Translated by David Constantine'. Banville's three Kleist plays are labelled, on their front covers, as 'versions', and in the blurbs as 'based on the work of Heinrich von Kleist'.

Bassnett summarises one of the particular problems of Literary Translation Studies thus:

> Much time and ink has been wasted attempting to differentiate between *translations*, *versions*, *adaptations* and the establishment of a hierarchy of 'correctness' between these categories. Yet the differentiation between them derives from a concept of the reader as the passive receiver of the text in which its Truth is enshrined. In other words, if the text is perceived as an object that should only produce a single invariant reading, any 'deviation' on the part of the reader/translator will be judged as a transgression [author's note: or,

alternatively, as a more "creative" interpretation or adaptation] (Bassnett 2002:85)

Bassnett argues that, since the position of the author as the sole authority over the text, and the reader as a mere consumer of the text, has been destabilised by scholars such as Barthes and Kristeva, thus destabilising the idea of a single correct interpretation of a text, it follows that the delineation between a translation and an adaptation is impossible to determine (2002:86).

This claim does not go undisputed. Some champions of adaptation studies, keen to carve out the discipline's own place within the Arts, draw a distinct line between translations and adaptations, with O'Thomas arguing that adaptations 'take place across media rather than cultures - literature into film, diary extract into stage play, etc.' (O'Thomas 2010:48; for a summary of critical perspectives on this debate, see Raw 2012:1). Following this logic, neither Constantine's nor Banville's target texts could not be labelled as adaptations at all, since they do not involve a change in medium.

For the purposes of this thesis, I follow Bassnett in her assertion that such discussions, if they aim to establish definitive labels, are futile. Where the exact line lies between what constitutes a target text and what does not is not determined in this thesis. Neither will any reference to a target text as a translation, adaptation or version intend to convey that the text exists on a different, discrete plane than texts labelled differently. My position is that all translation is creative, and all translation inherently involves creative choice, making the exact distinction between translation and adaptation irrelevant. The authors' own use of terminology to discuss their writing will form part of a debate that will be examined further in the final chapter of this thesis, in relation to how each author - and reader - views his or her own agency or autonomy in his or her translating, adapting or reading activity.

A related discussion can be had around the validity of incorporating interviews with the authors themselves in analysis of the target texts. If my thesis will take the position that the author is dead, thus granting the reader or translator the autonomy to engage on an equal footing with the source text, why then, as a reader of Banville's and Constantine's texts, should I seek to establish their intentions when producing their target texts? In *Translation and Creativity: Perspectives on Creative Writing and Translation Studies* (2006), Loffredo and Perteghella tackle this conundrum, suggesting that postmodernism has not entirely killed the author but rather transformed the concept into one of 'agency and subjectivity': 'Subjectivity not only avoids 'killing' the author, but it also brings about the 'birth' of the translator as a co-author' (2006:6). Thus each reader or translator is a (co)author who brings his or her own position to the text. In this way, in my interpretations of the texts under discussion in this thesis I am, in effect, a co-author, who will take into account the authorial intentions of Banville and Constantine, but not slavishly accept them without scrutiny in my analyses.

2. A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF SCENES FROM KLEIST'S *DER ZERBROCHNE KRUG* AND ITS TARGET TEXTS BY BANVILLE AND CONSTANTINE

Kleist's *Der zerbrochne Krug* was first published in 1811. Arguably his best-known play, it has been translated or adapted by both Constantine - in his 1997 *Selected Writings* - and by Banville in 1994. The setting is a Dutch village in the seventeenth century. The plot centres on a trial, instigated by Frau Marthe, who demands recompense for the breaking of her jug. She knows that it was broken by a figure fleeing from the bedchamber of her daughter, Eve. She mistakenly believes the figure to have been Eve's fiancé, Ruprecht, and accuses him of thereby breaking the jug and besmirching her unmarried daughter's virtue. The trial is to be heard by Judge Adam, who is assisted by his clerk, Licht. It becomes clear as the play progresses, to both the audience and the characters, that the perpetrator of the crime is Judge Adam himself. The proceedings are being overseen by Walter, an Assessor sent from the capital who is present to determine whether Adam is running the court according to state regulations.

It is important to highlight here that Banville's target text transposes the action of the play to Ballybog, a fictional village in Ireland, in 1846, during the Great Famine caused by potato blight. Banville's Assessor is Sir Walter, a bureaucrat sent by the ruling British government.

Extract from Act One, Scene One

The opening scene in all three texts serves to introduce the characters of the corrupt Judge Adam and his disingenuous clerk.

Kleist (2013:177)

Adam sitzt und verbindet sich ein Bein. Licht tritt auf.

Licht: Ei, was zum Henker, sagt, Gevatter Adam!
Was ist mit Euch geschehn? Wie seht Ihr aus?
Adam: Ja, seht. Zum Straucheln brauchts doch nichts als Füße.
Auf diesem glatten Boden, ist ein Strauch hier?
Gestrauchelt bin ich hier; denn jeder trägt
Den leid'gen Stein zum Anstoß in sich selbst.
Licht: Nein, sagt mir, Freund! Den Stein trüg jeglicher –?
Adam: Ja, in sich selbst!
Licht: Verflucht das!
Adam: Was beliebt?
Licht: Ihr stammt von einem lockern Ältervater,
Der so beim Anbeginn der Dinge fiel,
Und wegen seines Falls berühmt geworden;
Ihr seid doch nicht –?
Adam: Nun?
Licht: Gleichfalls –?
Adam: Ob ich –? Ich glaube –!
Hier bin ich hingefallen, sag ich Euch.
Licht: Unbildlich hingeschlagen?
Adam: Ja, unbildlich.
Es mag ein schlechtes Bild gewesen sein.

Constantine (1997:4)

Adam seated, bandaging his leg. Enter Licht.

Licht: Now what in hell's name, tell me, brother Adam
Has happened to you? Look what a sight you look.
Adam: Yes, look. All a man needs for slipping up
Is feet. Everything's level here
But here I tripped, for every man carries
The cursed stumbling block in him himself.
Licht: Pardon me, brother? Every man carries…
Adam: The stumbling block in him,
Licht: The devil he does.
Adam: I beg your pardon?
Licht: Your first forefather was
An unsteady man who at the outset fell
And for his fall was famous ever after.
You wouldn't yourself…?

Adam: Well?
Licht: Likewise?
Adam: Wouldn't what?
I fell down here, I tell you - fell down flat.
Licht: And only literally?
Adam: Just so. The figure I cut

Was not a pretty one.

Banville (1994:11)

A small chamber beside the courtroom. From his bed in a curtained alcove
Judge Adam, having slept in his clothes, rises painfully, disheveled and
hungover. He has gashes on his head, his face is scratched, and he is limping.
Enter Lynch.

Lynch: Judge Adam! Why, what's happened? Look at you!
Judge Adam: Is that you, Lynch? I fell, don't ask me how.
In this world, all you need is feet to stumble.
For each one has a stumbling block within.
Lynch: Well, you would know, Judge Adam: you had a noted
Ancestor who fell a mighty fall
And thereby found his fame. But surely you - ?
Judge Adam: What do you mean?
Lynch: You likewise fell?
Judge Adam: That's right.
    Just here I took a fall and very near
    Knocked out my eye.
Lynch: A real fall?
Judge Adam: Yes, real!
    You doubt my word, man?

Even the first two lines of Constantine's *The Broken Jug*, the first Kleist text in his

collection and thus, potentially, his reader's first introduction to Kleist, show signs of

the delayed-meaning syntax and word-order confusion that he finds crucial to

understanding Kleist:

Syntax [...] is the expression of [Kleist's] will to make the world make sense.

> So my aim in this translation was not to arrive at unexceptionable English; but at an English haunted and affected by the strangeness of the original. All good writing defamiliarizes our world, makes us feel strange in it (from Constantine's introduction to the *Selected Writings* 1997:xxvi)

With this in mind, I will analyse the opening of Constantine's target text:

> Licht: Now what in hell's name, tell me, brother Adam
> Has happened to you? Look what a sight you look.

Whilst nobody could argue that the syntax here is extraordinarily difficult to parse, or even that the sentence is of any remarkable length, there are, I would argue, already signs of Constantine reflecting Kleist's peculiar style, perhaps even more so than in the German. The text immediately instills a sense of disorientation that has been identified by Kleist scholars as a fundamental aspect of his artistic legacy (e.g. High 2013:22). The main clause of the sentence - 'what […] has happened to you?' - is not completed before the reader has encountered three distinct syntactical elements, each performing a different role for the new reader, and pulling him or her away from the sentence's basic structure. The emphasis and religious element of 'in hell's name'; an imperative in 'tell me'; and Licht's address of 'brother Adam', which provides the new information of a character name and a possible relationship: these all serve to delay the meaning of this first sentence. The plodding rhythm of 'tell me, brother Adam' adds to this slowing effect. 'What' (for the German 'was') is not repeated as it is in the source text, thus stretching the basic structure of the sentence over the three other elements mentioned above. Similarly disjointed structures abound within Constantine's target texts; another example from later on in this opening scene reads as follows: 'and grab a hold/ On what I hung up yesterday evening/ Wet through, on the stove, my trousers, on the rail,/ I grab them hold, do you follow me?, and thinking,/ Fool that I am, to keep upright […]'.

This sentence is then followed by the palindrome-esque structure of 'Look what a sight you look', both a comment and an imperative, with the repetition of 'look' marked, and not a feature of the German. While Constantine's rendering of this opening speech begins *in medias res*, with high energy, the reader is nevertheless already required to devote a high level of concentration to create sense. This makes a subtle further meaning of 'All a man needs for slipping up/ Is feet' even more apt – the metrical *Versfuß* of Kleist's (and Constantine's) language is a slippery place to inhabit, for character and reader alike.

I introduce here perhaps the most significant aspect of Constantine's reason for admiring, reading and translating Kleist:

> Kleist's syntax, largely hypotactic, is the chief means by which the story's sense, its effect on our intelligence and our feelings, is engendered and conveyed. So I had to cleave as close as English would allow to that difficult and intricately testing syntax and on no account make it easier, less strange, for the reader in English than it is for the reader in German. (Constantine 2018, appendix B)

Constantine's belief that hypotactic syntax is the primary driver of the effect of Kleist's writing makes it clear why his target text would be characterised by complex English syntax. Constantine remarks upon the effect of hypotaxis on the reader:

> the brain is being tested and affected in different ways if you are entering upon a sentence and having to defer the point at which the sense of it falls into place, because the mind is keeping open the possibilities (2018, appendix B)

The higher degree of inflection in German grammar relative to English grammar results in the English syntax in Constantine's translations of Kleist having a particularly marked effect on the English reader. The aim is to force the reader's brain into

deferring the completion of meaning as a means to convey the ambiguity of Kleist's

writing, an ambiguity that is also expressed through theme, character and structure.

Comparing Constantine's version to Banville's makes the disorienting effect of

the former's syntax more patent. Banville's opening lines contain nearly all of the same

content in a structurally straightforward manner. Banville's characters speak in what is

arguably a more natural speech style, and his text also makes the professional identity

of Adam very clear:

Lynch: Judge Adam! Why, what's happened? Look at you!

At least part of the explanation for this difference in approach can arguably be sought

in the purpose of each target text. While Constantine's *Selected Writings* were

primarily translated to be read, Banville was writing specifically for a theatre

production, and was eager to ensure that the general public enjoyed it. As Banville

remarked during my interview with him:

> I wanted to get people into the theatre. [...] Kleist [...] was vulgar in the best
> sense of the term - he was of the people, he tried to be, and I try to be as well.
> [...] I want to be popular, but unfortunately I've got a reputation for ivory-
> towerism. [...] I don't write for reviewers, I don't write for academics, I don't
> write to win prizes; I write in the hope that the woman at the checkout will be
> touched, will be delighted, will be transported. (2018, appendix A)

It is important to note here that I do not mean to claim that the public would not enjoy

or understand a performance of Constantine's *The Broken Jug*. Nor will I argue that

Constantine only intends his writing to be read by a narrow, academic section of

society - in fact, as will be discussed in future chapters, the opposite is true. However,

in this case it is clear that Banville felt strongly that it was important to engage and

'delight' the audience of his play from the very first line, in the hope of reinvigorating

the Irish theatre, which he considered to be stale at the time:

> I wanted to put Kleist on at the theatre in Ireland. Theatre at that time was
> moribund in this country. Endless productions of Oscar Wilde and Seán
> O'Casey. And my interest always was to open up the island to outside
> influences. (2018, appendix A)

Interestingly, this statement is similar to one made by Neil Bartlett, who, as Artistic

Director of the Lyric Hammersmith theatre, wrote and directed an English-language

version of Kleist's *Prinz Friedrich von Homburg* in 2002. Reflecting upon that time in

a 2013 interview, Bartlett recounts:

> I was once cornered by someone from the local council who was huffing and
> puffing about 'Do you really think that [...] people's rates should be going to
> putting on plays by Genet or Marivaux or Kleist?' And [...] I walked him to the
> window and I said, 'So you point out to me which of those people walking
> down the street are too stupid to come and see a play by Kleist. Who are you
> saying is not entitled to come and see that beautiful play?' [...] if I have a
> mission, that's my mission. I just do not believe that certain kinds of art belong
> to certain kinds of people. I was brought up with that English class system of
> culture [...] and I hate it and I'm doing everything to stop it. (Bartlett 2013)

Banville's attitude - that Kleist is 'of the people' and needs to be put on the stage for

the general public - demonstrates a similar disdain for the cultural classism that Bartlett

identifies as particularly English. For these writers, Kleist has occupied a critical

position in their mission to broaden the audience of art that is all too often deemed to be

too intellectual to have general appeal.

As will be seen throughout this thesis, Banville shares with Constantine his

deep admiration for the ambiguity of Kleist's texts. Where their perspectives differ,

however, regards the focal point of this ambiguity. Whilst Constantine assigns heavy

weight to Kleist's syntax, as discussed above, Banville's statements rarely identify the

syntax as a chief factor. This is perhaps unsurprising, given the fact that Banville's level of German language skill is, as he himself admits, basic, particularly in comparison to a respected translator and academic of German literature such as Constantine. Therefore, if for Banville the ambiguous force of Kleist's writing lies mainly elsewhere, it follows that his target texts can achieve the effect he desired when he set out to 'put Kleist on at the theatre in Ireland', without necessarily creating the same sense of disorientation through syntax that Constantine finds to be indispensable.

Each author's perspective regarding the autonomy or authority he holds in relation to the source text is also, no doubt, reflected in this difference, as will be discussed throughout this thesis.

I will now return to a close reading of the opening scene of *Der zerbrochne Krug,* in order to discuss the thematic elements that are introduced in each target text.

Constantine emphasises religious language throughout the target text, and this begins from the first line. Regarding Kleist's text, Schmitz-Emans comments on the aptness of Licht's first line - 'Ei, was zum Henker' - stating that the 'Henker' here plays 'eine bedenkliche Nebenrolle', and that the question 'sich schon darum nicht nur aufs Physisch-Vordergründige bezieht' (2002:48). In his target text, Constantine translates as 'Now what in hell's name', associating Adam with hell. If Kleist's question points to the hangman, Constantine's points to hell.

Additionally, Constantine references the devil several times in exclamations relating to Adam. When Adam remarks upon each man having the stumbling block within himself, an image that, of course, applies to Adam himself and his recent behaviour, Constantine's Licht replies 'The devil he does' for Kleist's 'Verflucht das'.

In the opening scene, after the extract quoted above, Adam relates his injuries: Constantine translates 'The devil I have' for Kleist's 'Den Teufel auch'. It is interesting to note that several of these remarks are made by Licht, who can thus be understood to be "shining a light" on the reality of Adam's moral character via double meanings. Licht's motive for doing so is, however, not yet clear.

Conversely, comparison with the source text and with Constantine's target text highlights that Banville is not pushing the religious language in this opening scene. Examples from the scene that occur after the passage quoted above read as follows: For 'Morgenlied' Constantine suggests 'day's first hymn'; for 'unser Herrgott', 'the Good Lord'; and for 'Allgerechter!', 'Lord thou art just!' Respectively, Banville renders 'Morgenlied' as 'dawn song', and gives no corresponding term for 'unser Herrgott' or 'Allgerechter!'. Banville also erases Kleist's comment that the clubfoot is the foot 'Der ohnehin schwer den Weg der Sünde wandelt?'. Similarly, as the plot moves on, Banville's Martha does not mention that Eve will be disgraced in church, but is just concerned for her reputation.

One can, of course, argue with regard to the effect of these choices that Banville's reader or audience is highly unlikely to be aware of these differences between his text and the source text. Nevertheless, analysis of this kind does provide insight into the author's choices while adapting. Furthermore, consistent microstructural shifts result in macrostructural shifts, as posited by van Leuven-Zwart (see Şerban 2013:217).

Banville's target text develops a more explicitly violent theme. Critics have long argued that Kleist's naming of the court clerk Licht has Enlightenment connotations, due to the 'light' that this character sheds on the situation - i.e. his

gradual unravelling of Judge Adam's actual actions and illumination of the truth. The name has been argued to be ironic, however, due to Licht's self-serving motives; Reeve goes so far as to argue that Licht's behaviour throughout the play is so Machiavellian as to embody 'ein dunkles Licht', a 'literal negation of Aufklärung' (1983:64). Banville's renaming of this character as Lynch has plainly different connotations. Importantly, 'to lynch' does not merely mean 'to kill; it also carries the added significance of 'to kill without a trial'. As in Kleist's source text, Banville's choice here is ironic: the play is entirely focused on a trial, yet the justice administered by corrupt institutions such as Judge Adam's court can be interpreted as, essentially, equally morally abhorrent and unfair as a lynching. In both cases, those who have most power abuse it to enforce their judgements, often with violent or life-threatening consequences, upon the less privileged. The mob justice aspect of the term is reflected in the village's treatment of Eve and Robert, and, indeed, the fact that this name is given not to Banville's Adam, but to his clerk, strengthens the sense that violence and corruption is inherent in the social system and will not disappear once one abusive civil servant is deposed.

The directness of the clerk's renaming is mirrored in the stage directions and dialogue. Extended stage directions make explicit Adam's drinking and his dishevelled state. With insertions that have no explicit correspondents in the ST, Banville's Lynch is more directly accusatory ('Well, you would know, Judge Adam', 'But surely you-[…] You likewise fell?' 'I thought you said it happened/ When you were getting out of bed just now?'), and his Adam preemptively and defensively wards off further enquiry ('I fell, don't ask me how', 'You doubt my word, man?', 'How is it you aren't laughing, then?'). Banville's Adam also accidentally admits his guilt ('Lynch: You likewise fell? Adam: That's right'), and his Lynch and Adam argue about who is/will

be to blame if the accounts are not up-to-date: 'Adam: That's your job. Lynch: Maybe, but you're the judge.'

Word-play and double meanings abound in the first scene of Kleist's *Der zerbrochne Krug*, presenting an occasion for the translator or adapter to demonstrate his or her creative powers. Constantine develops some word-play later in this scene: 'And this [fall] befell you when?' 'The figure I cut'. Constantine does not retain the word play of 'stolpr'' and 'Lauf des Tages' that occurs shortly after this passage in the source text (Kleist 2013:177). Kleist's 'wandelt' has the force of both walking and, albeit when used with the reflexive *sich*, turning. Constantine's response to the source text is to translate 'wandelt' as 'bent'. I would argue that Constantine is developing his own word-play in the following passage:

> Adam: before the course
> Was well begun the Good Lord turned my foot.
> Licht: The left, no doubt?
> Adam: The left?
> Licht: This one,
> The weighty one?
> Adam: Indeed.
> Licht: Lord thou art just!
> The one already heavily bent on sinning (4)

In modern-day British English, 'bent' has a colloquial meaning of being corrupt, particularly with regard to authority figures abusing their power within the justice system (e.g. a bent cop). It is also a derogatory, homophobic slang term to refer to homosexuality. The *Encyclopedia of Homosexuality* presents the etymology of the word thus:

> The *Oxford English Dictionary* records a colloquial use of straight as
> "honest, honorable, frank" in 1864. During the same period the word

meant "chaste" (of a woman). Some contamination from the Biblical "strait is the gate" is likely.

Since at least 1914, criminal argot has applied *bent* both to individuals (thieves) and things (e.g. a bent ["hot"] car). The secondary usage of *bent*, "homosexual", has been current in British slang since the fifties. (Dynes 2016:313)

The "strait is the gate" reference mentioned in the encyclopedia entry is from *The Gospel of Luke*: 'Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able'. Modern slang interpretations of the word 'bent' would, therefore, appear to derive from the same concept of 'straight' meaning honest or chaste, and 'bent' implying sexual or moral deviance. Constantine's Adam is both sexually and morally deviant, and a figure of authority within the court system who abuses his power. The use of 'turned' for 'ausrenken' a few lines before the appearance of 'bent' puts the reader in mind of a physical turn away from morality, especially since, as in the source text, the turn is away from the 'course' during which, according to Adam, he had the 'day's first hymn' in his mouth. The irony that Adam claims it is the 'Good Lord' who 'turned' his foot - 'the one heavily bent on sinning' - is present in Constantine's text.

Banville's text does not engage in substantial levels of word-play. He creates humour in this section, and further develops the characterisation of Judge Adam, by inserting a story from Irish folklore:

Adam: The old man shows his ugly foot
To every stranger calling to the house,
And bets them he can find an uglier still,
And when the money is slapped down produces
His other foot, and thereby wins the bet. (12)

The story of the uglier foot is a folk tale which has both Irish and Icelandic origins. It is

instantly recognisable as forming a part of the Irish tradition of folk stories, which

contributes to the localised atmosphere of the target text's setting, and sets up certain

themes. The story is based on trickery, a trickery whereby one party - the old man -

knows something and coerces a second party - the stranger - into a decision that will

advantage the former and disadvantage the latter. The old man possesses superior

knowledge within the context of the bet - it is his foot - and the stranger's downfall lies

in his or her confidence, which is based in his stranger's ignorance that he lacks the

knowledge and control in the situation. The stranger has the rug pulled from under his

or her feet when the old man shows himself to be two-faced, or, in this case, two-

footed. The story demonstrates that this is a regular, ongoing occurrence; the old man

tricks 'every stranger calling to the house' this way. The old man, of course, is

associated with Adam himself. It is clearly a humorous tale, and yet this underlying

meaning is there, and these deeper ramifications are explicitly referenced by Banville's

characters, with Adam highlighting Lynch's lack of laughter. This is a further passive

aggression on Lynch's part, who comments that the story is 'very funny' and yet

conspicuously does not laugh, and Adam's response ('How is it that you aren't

laughing, then?') demonstrates his desire to control others' responses or interpretations

of his statements according to his own narrative. In all three texts, however, Adam's

fondness for his trickster's clubfoot will come to hurt him at the end of the play, when

it will be used as evidence against him in the trial: in this case, the old man will be

desperate to hide, not flaunt, the uglier foot.

Who is the perpetrator or victim of the trickery of the play as a whole is

debatable. Contrary to expectation, Adam himself might be said to be the deluded party

in this instance; whilst at this point the text allies Adam with the old man who emerges victorious from the bet, by the end of the day Adam will have been found out and suspended. Banville's Eve, too, it is later revealed, and unlike Kleist's, has a disability regarding her feet: she wears an iron caliper and has a limp. The primary purpose of this detail is to complicate the motivations for the engagement between Robert and Eve; but it also links Eve to the folk story, and to Adam himself; and it is indeed revealed later that she is not as naive as she might otherwise appear, being aware of the self-serving reasons Robert has for marrying her. Further to this, Eve fulfils a double function of being involved in duplicity (not revealing the identity of the man in her room) and simultaneously being duped (by Adam's false threats). Variations on the uglier foot folk story include the old man in turn being outwitted, when his trick is revealed; and the loser of the bet being quietly glad that she has lost, since this means her own ugly feet have escaped scrutiny and remain a secret to all but herself. The folk tale, therefore, is not as straightforward as it might seem, and the trickster can quickly become the tricked, or may even already be the tricked without realising it. An Irish reader or audience member might be familiar with any one of these versions, all of which deal with multiple levels of deception, wrongfootedness and lack of knowledge. In this way Banville's insertion of the story of the uglier foot anticipates not only the twists and turns that lead towards the end of the play, the climax of which involves Adam deceptively displaying only his good foot, but also the themes of Kleist's other texts, especially *Amphitryon* (and therefore *God's Gift* and *The Infinities*).

Banville's development of the themes discussed above relate not only to Adam's own personal situation, but also to the wider political scenario. When Judge Adam asks Lynch for the news, Lynch begins to tell him: 'The meal depot is empty,

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and there's no-'. Judge Adam cuts him off: 'For God's sake, not that kind of news!'

(12). Certain kinds of news are acceptable; others are not. This of course serves to

introduce the audience to the context of the Famine; however it also establishes that

Judge Adam, a figure of authority, does not want to hear negative news regarding the

people over whom he has authority - people whose situation he, it transpires, is actively

making worse. It is also noteworthy that Lynch broaches this topic when the audience

can assume that he knows that Judge Adam will not want to hear it. Throughout the

text, Banville emphasises the theme of knowledge that is commonly known but not

spoken, and, indeed, deliberately ignored. This is, of course, the basis of Kleist's play:

as Allan convincingly demonstrates, even a character such as Walter, who, thanks to his

position of power and supposed objectivity, might initially be supposed to be relied

upon to uncover and publish the truth, is actively trying to 'cobble together a cover-up'

to preserve the authority of the court, and, by proxy, the state itself (1996:98-9). I

would argue that this aspect of the text makes it particularly attractive to be adapted by

an Irish writer, and set in Ireland under British rule. It has been documented that the

Famine was caused and/or exacerbated by wilful "ignorance" on the part of the British

government (see Lengel 2002:83). I will discuss this aspect of Banville's text in more

detail in a later chapter.

I will remark here upon an effect of Banville's lack of word-play which, I argue,

has significant ramifications. As will be discussed in Chapter 4, Banville disregards the

metaphorical-to-literal ending of *Penthesilea* in his version of the text, *Love in the*

Wars. Kleist's language, in his wordplay, is not only humorous: it places within the text

a mixing or confusing of the literal (a literal 'Strauch') and the metaphorical

('straucheln'). Given how frequently Banville adopts imagery and metaphor in his other

works (see Chapter 4; see also McMinn 1999:1-2), it is surprising that this trend has not continued into his Kleist target texts.

Extract from Act One, Scene Three

The following extract takes place in all three texts directly before the Assessor arrives. The scene proves fruitful for analysis of Constantine's treatment of abuse within religion and society, as well as Banville's response to Kleist's account of the judge's dream, which incorporates Banville's obsession: the concept of the twin. Banville's text also prompts the audience to make connections between Adam's professional authority as a judge and his Irish/British identity.

Kleist (2013:187)

>   Adam: Mir ahndet heut nichts Guts, Gevatter Licht.
>
>   Licht: Warum?
>
>   Adam: Es geht bunt alles über Ecke mir.
>   Ist nicht auch heut Gerichtstag?
>
>   Licht: Allerdings.
>   Die Kläger stehen vor der Türe schon.
>
>   Adam: – Mir träumt', es hätt ein Kläger mich ergriffen
>   Und schleppte vor den Richtstuhl mich; und ich,
>   Ich säße gleichwohl auf dem Richtstuhl dort,
>   Und schält' und hunzt' und schlingelte mich herunter,
>   Und judiziert' den Hals ins Eisen mir.
>
>   Licht: Wie? Ihr Euch selbst?
>
>   Adam: So wahr ich ehrlich bin.
>   Drauf wurden beide wir zu eins, und flohn,
>   Und mußten in den Fichten übernachten.

Licht: Nun? Und der Traum, meint Ihr –?

Adam: Der Teufel hols.
Wenns auch der Traum nicht ist: ein Schabernack,
Sei's, wie es woll, ist wider mich im Werk!

Licht: Die läpp'sche Furcht! Gebt Ihr nur vorschriftsmäßig,
Wenn der Gerichtsrat gegenwärtig ist,
Recht den Parteien auf dem Richterstuhle,
Damit der Traum vom ausgehunzten Richter
Auf andre Art nicht in Erfüllung geht.

Constantine (1997:13)

Adam: Today looks very ill to me, old friend.

Licht: Why so?

Adam: Things coming at me every which way.
And don't we sit today?

Licht: Indeed we do.
The plaintiffs are already at the door.

Adam: - I dreamed a plaintiff had seized hold of me
And hauled me up before the bench, and I
None the less I was seated on that bench
And homilied, lambasted and badmouthed me
And handed down the iron on my own neck.

Licht: What! You did that to you?

Adam: True as I'm honest.
Then both of us were one and ran away
And had to hole up in the woods all night.

Licht: Well? And the dream, you think…?

Adam: The devil take it.
If it's not the dream there's some damn jinx or other
Has got it in for me.

Licht:　　　These are foolish fears.
But follow the rules while the Assessor's present
And from the bench give those before you justice
Or else the dream of the lambasted judge
Might come true in another way.

Banville (1994:25)

Judge Adam and Lynch in the courtroom

Judge Adam: I am not looking forward to this day.

Lynch: The plaintiffs are already at the door.

Judge Adam: I dreamt last night I was both judge and judged.
I had been caught red-handed, and someone
Had got me by the scruff and dragged me here.
And as I stood in chains before the bench
Who should appear but me, with black cap on,
And casually condemned myself to death.
Then I the judge jumped down, grabbed I the accused,
And together like a pair of siamese twins
We legged it off into the woods to hide.
I'm telling you, I woke up in a sweat.

Lynch: And you believe the dream may be prophetic?

Judge Adam: I don't know, but it's left me feeling worried.

Lynch: Take my advice, stick to the book, hand out
Impartial judgements, as you always do;
That way, Sir high and mighty Orange Peel
Won't have a word to say to you - or me.

Judge Adam: Yes, and if we're lucky, we'll stay free!

The first lines of Constantine's translation of this passage demonstrate Constantine's slightly old-fashioned language. When he translates, Constantine aims to evoke a timeless quality:

> you are trying to arrive at a language which is not up-to-the minute modern because that way its sell-by-date is gone before you've finished, but is not the sort of archaic stuff that I've mentioned before where you know it vaguely sounds like Shelley or whatever but something in-between which is a kind of - it's sort of subterfuge really because it's got to sound sufficiently strange in ways which are not just the strangeness of the antiquarian (Constantine, appendix B).

Comparing Constantine's translation of this opening line with Banville's makes the difference between their approaches apparent:

> Constantine:
>
> Adam: Today looks very ill to me, old friend.
> Licht: Why so?
>
> Banville:
>
>> Adam: I am not looking forward to this day.

Constantine's use of 'ill', 'old friend', 'why so?' are part of a somewhat strange language, although it is arguable whether it can be pinpointed as being definitively and specifically antiquated. Banville's is more colloquial in comparison, although his 'this day' has a certain antiquated quality to it.

Nevertheless, both Constantine and Banville also use a certain amount of more informal language or dialect. In Banville's case, dialect and slang, both Hiberno-English ('eejit' (13), 'Begob!' (40)) and British, specifically Cockney ('bleeder; (18), 'squire' (19), 'Wotcher' (20)); in Constantine's case, taking this extract as an example, 'badmouthed me', 'had to hole up in the woods', 'some damn jinx or other/ Has got it

in for me'. In the same speech, in Constantine's target text, high-register language is also present, such as 'lambasted' and 'homilied'.

It would not, however, be accurate to label the dialogue in Banville's target text as straightforwardly and exclusively more "modern" or more colloquial that that in Constantine's target text. An example to elucidate this point involves the use of rhyme: Banville typically uses rhyming couplets at the end of scenes (e.g. 'We'll have to sort them out, if we are able; They're thrown down like the fallen tower of Babel'). For Irish, or English-speaking, audiences, this is most likely to be reminiscent of Shakespearean language, which, while mixing low and high registers, is nevertheless perceived to have an elite and antiquated status within the literature with which the general public has some familiarity. Whether this was Banville's intention when making this choice is debatable. I would speculate that Banville adopted this approach for two main reasons: firstly, because it is an aurally pleasing means by which to signal the end of a scene; and secondly, to heighten the sense, or even remind the audience, that what they are witnessing is a play, a fiction, an aesthetic object that has been contrived.

Additionally, Robert, the fiancé of Eve and the supposed perpetrator (who has been renamed by Banville from Kleist's Ruprecht), speaks in rhyming iambic pentameter when he is first introduced:

Robert: (*Loftily*) It is not anger that I feel towards you,
But disappointment: that, and bitter rue.
When we first met, I gave you all my heart,
And swore that from your side I'd never part (34)

The humour inherent in the spectacle of the lowly Robert speaking 'loftily' - according to the stage directions (34) - in rhyming verse, in a supposedly everyday setting, only

strengthens the aestheticising effect. Despite the elevation of his adopted airs and graces, his flowery, clichéd language could belong in a cheesy love song: the 'heart'/'part' rhyme particularly creates this impression (consider, for example, the lyrics of songs by The Beatles such as 'Baby It's You' or 'Devil in Her Heart' (both 1963)). Thus despite the gritty, abhorrent nature of the play's historical backdrop, Banville's target text does not forget that it is a farce:

> I don't like naturalistic theatre. I can't sit through ten minutes of an Arthur Miller play - I can see it's good and so on but I keep waiting for the scenery to fall down and the leading lady's knickers to fall off and the hero to fall flat on his face. I never believe in it. To me, theatre is pantomime. My great ambition is to write a pantomime. I want to write a pantomime. It's an amazing form because it's always taking place on two levels, with the jokes aimed at the adults and the jokes aimed at the children. Technically that's a wonderful challenge (Banville, appendix A)

A piece of pantomime (an English word derived from the Greek, *pantomimos*, meaning 'imitator of all') is present in the target text - with no correspondent in the source text - when, in Act Two, Scene One, Judge Adam and Sir Walter, and their respective clerks, eat lunch. Banville's stage directions stipulate: 'throughout the scene, the faces of hungry people come and go at the window, and Judge Adam in dumbshow keeps trying to wave them away, while diverting Sir Walter's attention' (56). This is, essentially, a tragi-comic visual representation of the crux of the play's conflict: the powerful prosper and take advantage of the poor peasants, and pretend to be ignorant of this fact. This is also the crux of the Great Famine, and of inequality throughout the world.

The self-consciousness of Banville's *The Broken Jug* is also conveyed via the characters of Lynch and his British counterpart Ball (an invention of Banville's), whose sarcastic asides set them apart from the main action. This is a feature of Banville's

Kleist adaptations, and of Banville's oeuvre more generally, that has been noted by critics (see Murphy 2018 and Friberg-Harnesk 2018). Mercury, Hermes and Odysseus in his target texts all make frequent witty asides to the audience, to a greater extent than is present in the source texts. Discussions featured later in this thesis surrounding Banville's *God's Gift* and *The Infinities* will explore this aspect of Banville's writing in more detail.

In his version of the source text, Constantine continues to develop the focus on religious language; and, in particular, language that specifically fits within the Christian tradition. 'Some damn jinx or other/Has got it in for me' for 'ein Schabernack,/ Sei's, wie es woll, ist wider mich im Werk!' implies that Constantine's Adam assigns some sort of mystical, universal motivation behind his upcoming troubles, and 'damn' again evokes hell. For Kleist's 'sich schälen' - 'to peel oneself' - Constantine translates 'homilied'. While it also has the more general meaning of a moralising lecture, Collins dictionary online defines a 'homily' as a 'sermon, especially one centering on Scriptural texts', and the Christian connotation is still very much present in this marked word, not especially common in general usage. Also worth noting about this word choice is its etymology: the root of the term is the Greek *homilos*, meaning crowd: as in, it is a sermon or commentary delivered to a crowd (Merriam-Webster online). The etymological connotations, for an author as immersed in Ancient Greek literature and translation as Constantine, would doubtless have been apparent, and have the effect of emphasising that it is an act that takes place within a society, in front of others, a criticism or lesson delivered based on a specific social code or mores (the Scripture). I will explore later in this thesis the significant extent to which Constantine's engagement with Christianity relates to his conceptions of the role of its imagery and

language in society. For Constantine, the New Testament has significant social

implications:

> But [Christianity] clearly matters, because there's an extraordinary wealth of stories, like the Lazarus story and Mary Magdalene in the garden and just any number of them. And Christ is in some ways a deeply sympathetic character who's clearly got no place whatsoever in the way the world is now. He'd be tipping the hedge-fund managers out on their asses, there's absolutely no doubt about that. There's no possible negotiation between what it says in the Bible - the New Testament particularly - and the carry-on that we're in, none really.

> [...]

> My brother was an expert witness at one of the many enquiries into historic child abuse. He is an historian. In 1944 there was this idea in Britain that you would never send children away into any space; there had to be accommodation, and you wouldn't split siblings ever, and you would keep them in contact with their parents if at all possible. Until into the 60s Barnardos and others, the Christian Brothers, were still sending these children out, separating them and telling them their mum and dad were dead, and putting them in the outback where they were systematically abused in the most monstrous fashion. [My brother] provided the expert [testimony] - and I wrote a story out of that, terrible stuff. It is so awful I really had to leave stuff out - there comes a point where it's too vile to serve as a fiction. But at the heart of that is this abuse of children, and Christ is very definite about children: 'Suffer the little children to come unto me.' And he puts his arm around one and says, 'If you ever harm one of these, it were better for that man to be sunk to the bottom of the ocean with a millstone around his neck.' And these were Christian brothers, with a person in charge who was a member of the Christian Church, with children in their power from the age of seven or eight right through to fourteen. And they kicked them out totally destroyed - unforgivable. But there's this clear Christian teaching about children. That's all still there, and you can call it Christian or you can just call it decent humanity. It's just that there is chapter and verse for it, a lot of it, for why you shouldn't be doing things like that, and yet you get an institution of it who is systematically doing exactly that.

> Coming back to Kleist, there's a lot of pity and sympathy for the human lot. [...] characters like Eve and Alcmene, the female characters are deeply touching because they're riven in this fashion, and in a world that doesn't fit their feeling, and their feeling is a desirable and true feeling. And then the world, usually men, let them down. (appendix B)

The social aspects of Christianity for Constantine are clear, and it is a matter that he speaks about with great passion. Constantine identifies women and children as representing some of the most vulnerable members of society, and the acknowledgment of, and compassion for their lot present in Kleist's texts. It should be remembered that Eve is young - not a woman but a girl - and is susceptible to the sexual abuse and manipulation that Judge Adam, as both a man, her elder, and a figure of authority, imposes. Judge Adam's actions are not, we might imagine, too dissimilar to those referenced by Constantine when discussing the Christian Brothers above. Adam employs Christian language in order to try to impose his desired outcome to the trial. To Kleist's Ruprecht, he says 'Bekennt Er, oder unterfängt Er sich,/ Hier wie ein gottvergeßner Mensch zu leugnen?'; Constantine translates this as 'Do you confess? Or will you have the face/ To stand there like a heathen sinner and deny it?' (30). To Kleist's Eve, Adam says 'Gib Gotte, hörst du, Herzchen, gib, mein Seel,/ Ihm und der Welt, gib ihm was von der Wahrheit./ Denk, daß du hier vor Gottes Richtstuhl bist,/ Und daß du deinen Richter nicht mit Leugnen,/ Und Plappern, was zur Sache nicht gehört/ Betrüben mußt'. In Constantine's target text, Adam commands 'little Miss Eve', as he patronisingly addresses her, 'Give God, d'you hear, my pet, give, damn me/ Him and the world, give Him some of the truth. Remember you stand before God's throne of judgement/ And by denials and by blabbing about/ What doesn't belong here musn't aggravate/ Your judge' (38). So engrained in our society are these notions that even today, in the twenty-first century, the use of this language to enforce compliance is not unusual. In the case of Adam's warning to Eve, the meaning is hidden, a veiled threat: while on the surface his commandments to Eve exhort her to act morally and speak the truth in front of 'God's throne of judgement', his real meaning is to make it

clear to her that she better act immorally and lie to cover up for him, or else. He implicitly associates himself with God by making the link between his profession and 'God's [...] judgement'; the surface level of his speech is perfectly innocent, but its true meaning is clear to Eve and to the audience.

Thus abuse often hides in plain sight, understood and perpetuated by many but unacknowledged in "polite" society. Constantine goes so far in the interview as to link this to the wealthy 'hedge-fund managers', members of arguably the most powerful institutions of today. It is no wonder, then, that Constantine translated this play, given his fervent interest in its themes. The hypocrisy of systematic abuse of power occurring in institutions that claim to represent the opposite, and claim a moral high ground while brazenly, and yet covertly, committing and sanctioning morally repugnant acts, will be a significant theme of my analysis of Kleist's presence in both Banville's and Constantine's wider oeuvres.

The perpetrators' lack of plausible deniability also comes across strongly in Banville's *The Broken Jug*. The final three lines of the extract quoted above, which have largely been inserted by Banville, with no direct correspondence in the source text, run thus: 'Lynch: […] stick to the book […] That way, Sir high and mighty Orange Peel/Won't have a word to say to you - or me. Judge Adam: Yes, and if we're lucky, we'll stay free!' Consider that Banville's Adam is introduced as being hungover and dishevelled in stage directions. Banville takes every opportunity, from his play's first words, to make explicit, where the source text strongly implies, Adam's clearly dubious character, as well as, perhaps to a lesser extent, that of Lynch. Not only is it entirely clear to the audience here that Adam and Lynch are morally corrupt, it is clear that each (especially Lynch) is aware of the other's corruption. In the scene preceding

the quoted extract Lynch explicitly tells Judge Adam that he does not believe Adam's story of how he was injured falling in his room, but that he is rather suspending his disbelief. To this Adam replies, 'No better place to do that, friend, than here'. Lynch, to an even greater extent than in the source text (in which he often makes suggestive statements or trails off), already seems to foresee Adam's downfall: when Banville's Adam says that he is not looking forward to the day ahead, Banville's Lynch does not enquire why, but (grimly?) states, unprompted, 'The plaintiffs are already at the door.' Lynch's suggestion that Adam avoid trouble by 'hand[ing] out/ Impartial judgements, as you always do' cannot be anything other than sarcastic and knowing (the text is partly playing on expectations, as in the story of the uglier foot). This is indeed all implied in the source text, and in Constantine's target text, but in Banville's target text it is frequently made explicit. His Adam and his Lynch are not even really pretending to believe in the other's good intentions. The characters here lack plausible deniability, and they cannot claim to be ignorant of the real situation.

Of interest is Banville's use of the term: 'red-handed' - 'Judge Adam: I had been caught red-handed' - for 'mich ergriffen', which makes explicit that in his dream Adam was in fact caught in the very act of doing something wrong. Furthermore, the idiom 'being caught red-handed' implies violence, as it is believed to derive etymologically from a reference to the blood that would be on the hands of a murderer or poacher. While Judge Adam's antics and comical nature may lead the audience to view him with some fondness, it is important not to forget that his actions as a landlord have contributed to the Great Famine, and he has attempted to sexually assault a young girl. Metaphorically, at least, there is blood on his hands.

Additionally, the red hand is a symbol of Ulster, the Northern Irish province that is the seat of Ulster unionism, Ulster loyalism and the Orange Order. The red hand is the focal point of the Ulster Banner, also known as the Flag of Northern Ireland. An Irish audience could reasonably be assumed to be aware of this image, and thereby be reminded, even if subconsciously, of the Unionists. Banville uses 'red-handed' to associate Judge Adam, subtly, with the United Kingdom's control of Ireland. This constitutes another reason for the Judge to feel guilty, or afraid of being reprimanded: his professional role is as an enforcer for British rule, and it is a role via which he actively takes advantage of his Irish countrymen in order to profit personally. This would make him, to many, a traitor to his country. The same can be said of Souse, Banville's version of Sosias from *Amphitryon*, who is an Irishman working for the English. Similar connotations of betrayal are present in the source text, but they are emphasised in Banville's target text, and would arguably evoke more raw emotion amongst Banville's Irish audience than they would for an audience of Kleist's play.

Banville's insertion of 'I was both judge and judged' and 'like a pair of siamese twins' stresses the themes of doubles and twins that the judge's dream in the source text evokes. These themes have long fascinated Banville:

> For as long as I can remember, which by now is a long time, I have suspected that I was conceived as one of a pair of twins, and that my brother – for surely it was a brother – died at birth and no one told me. It's perfectly possible that this is so, since my mother was strongly averse to speaking of anything to do with the messy business of sex and reproduction, and would have preferred to let me grow up in ignorance than to have had to explain to me that I was hauled into the world cheek-by-jowl with tragedy and loss.

> Originally I believed that I was unique in harbouring such a suspicion, but I've since discovered that it's a common fantasy. Many people, perhaps many thousands, perhaps many hundreds of thousands, are convinced that they were once one of two, and, like Job's servants, have alone survived to tell the tale. I

don't care; so far as I'm concerned, my uncanny sense of incompleteness, of *unfinishedness*, is unique to *me*, and I'm sticking to it.

None of us, of course, is a singular entity. The notion that behind all my posings and posturings there exists an enduring and indissoluble self, in the form of a kind of pilot light burning unquenchably somewhere behind my breast-bone, is an instance of what Coleridge would call spilt religion. For there is, I believe, no soul, no self; I am my postures and my poses, which is precisely what lends me any interest I possess as a human being. I'm an actor acting the role of who I am, or of the person I should like to be taken for, and all the world before me is a stage (Banville 2017)

Banville has mentioned the idea that he has always imagined himself to be a surviving twin in numerous interviews throughout his career. This idea links, as he describes, to his conviction that there is no single self, no 'pilot light'. If all we are is our 'postures and [...] poses', then there is no authentic self to be true to - we merely act out different roles. The trial is an aestheticised display of this, a stage of its own: it is a spectacle in which lawyers give ritualised monologues, like actors playing their parts. Thus Judge Adam, and Lynch, and, in fact, all of the characters in Kleist's and Banville's plays, are, by nature, composed of dual or multiple identities.

Der zerbrochne Krug, in its very premise, explores this theme: what happens when a man is called upon to investigate, and pronounce judgement on, a crime he himself has committed? What happens when a man's identity is effectively doubled, and he becomes 'both judge and judged'? Kleist's play is not the first text to employ this paradox, and in this way both Banville's and Constantine's texts take a place within the network of texts previously established around this idea. Discussing Judge Adam's similarity to the titular character of Sophocles' tragedy *Oedipus Rex*, Griffiths notes (2020): 'Kleist's Judge Adam is linked to Oedipus not only by his clubfoot, but also by being both judge and guilty party [...]. Yet there are also significant differences

between the two figures: [...] unlike Oedipus, he is fully aware of his guilt from the very start of proceedings. His role is not to uncover the truth but to obscure it' (2020:167). Kleist's character Adam is a subversion of the Greek hero and his tragic mission.

Consider the following chiasmus in Banville's text: 'Then I the judge jumped down, grabbed I the accused'. 'I the judged' and 'I the accused' surround their two verbs, producing a mirror-like effect that suggests the twin-like, dual nature of Adam's profession and character. It is important to remember, however, that this is not a case of the angel on one shoulder and devil on the other. Judge Adam's twins take the forms of the invulnerable and the vulnerable; abuser and abused; he who evades justice and has the authority to serve it to others as he sees fit, and he who is the victim of this authority.

Additionally, for Banville's Judge Adam, the dual role of judge and judged, the two twins, are also representations of his Irishness and "Britishness". One cannot exist in peace with the other, since the mere existence of one is an affront to the other, yet these two identities do, paradoxically, coexist in Judge Adam. Prompted by Kleist's macabre image of two physical bodies becoming one - 'Drauf wurden beide wir zu eins' - Banville's target text fits firmly within his oeuvre in this regard.

Extract from Act One, Scene Six
The following scene introduces the reader or audience member to the subject of the trial, and the quarrelling parties.

Kleist (2013:192-3)

Frau Marthe, Eve, Veit und Ruprecht treten auf. – Walter und Licht im Hintergrunde.

Frau Marthe: Ihr krugzertrümmerndes Gesindel, ihr!
Ihr sollt mir büßen, ihr!

Veit: Sei Sie nur ruhig,
Frau Marth! Es wird sich alles hier entscheiden.

Frau Marthe: O ja. Entscheiden. Seht doch! Den Klugschwätzer!
Den Krug mir, den zerbrochenen, entscheiden!
Wer wird mir den geschiednen Krug entscheiden?
Hier wird entschieden werden, daß geschieden
Der Krug mir bleiben soll. Für so'n Schiedsurteil
Geb ich noch die geschiednen Scherben nicht.

Veit: Wenn Sie sich Recht erstreiten kann, Sie hörts,
Ersetz ich ihn.

Frau Marthe: Er mir den Krug ersetzen.
Wenn ich mir Recht erstreiten kann, ersetzen.
Setz Er den Krug mal hin, versuch Ers mal,
Setz Er'n mal hin auf das Gesims! Ersetzen!
Den Krug, der kein Gebein zum Stehen hat,
Zum Liegen oder Sitzen hat, ersetzen!

Veit: Sie hörts! Was geifert Sie? Kann man mehr tun?
Wenn einer Ihr von uns den Krug zerbrochen,
Soll Sie entschädigt werden.

Frau Marthe: Ich entschädigt!
Als ob ein Stück von meinem Hornvieh spräche.
Meint Er, daß die Justiz ein Töpfer ist?
Und kämen die Hochmögenden und bänden
Die Schürze vor, und trügen ihn zum Ofen,
Die könnten sonst was in den Krug mir tun,
Als ihn entschädigen. Entschädigen!

Ruprecht: Laß Er sie, Vater. Folg Er mir. Der Drache!
's ist der zerbrochne Krug nicht, der sie wurmt,

Die Hochzeit ist es, die ein Loch bekommen,
Und mit Gewalt hier denkt sie sie zu flicken.
Ich aber setze noch den Fuß eins drauf:
Verflucht bin ich, wenn ich die Metze nehme.

Constantine (1997:18)

Enter Frau Marthe, Eve, Veit and Ruprecht. Walter and Licht at the back of the stage

Frau Marthe: Rabble, I say, rabble and jug-smashers,
You'll pay for this.

Veit: Easy, Frau Marthe, easy.
We'll get a judgement on the matter here.

Frau Marthe: Easy, he says! A judgement! Listen to him.
A judgement on my jug, my broken jug.
Easy to judge it back together again?
They'll judge my broken jug can stay in bits
And what's that judgement worth? Less than
The bits themselves.

Veit: Listen, will you?
If you can get the judge to decide your way
Then I'll replace your jug.

Frau Marthe: Replace it, will you?
Replace it if the judge decides my way?
Replace it in its proper place, try that,
Back on the window sill where it belongs,
My jug that's lost its bottom and can't stand up
And can't lie on its side and can't sit right.

Veit: You hear? Stop mouthing! What more can I do?
If you've had your jug smashed by one of us
We'll make amends.

Frau Marthe: You'll make amends, will you?
I've heard my cows talk better sense than that.
We're in a courtroom not a pottery

And if their High and Mighty Worships came themselves,
Put on their smocks and fired my pot again
They'd just as soon do you know what in it
As make amends. I ask you, make amends!

Ruprecht: Leave her be Father. Come along. The witch,
It's not her broken jug working her up.
What's wrong's the weddings that has gone to bits.
She thinks she'll mend it in this place by force
But I've a mind to put my boot on it.
Damn me to hell if I ever take the trollop.

Banville (1994:32-3)

*Judge Adam's chamber. Enter Lynch, leading Martha Reck, Eve, Willie Temple
and Robert Temple.*

Martha (*To Robert*) You'll pay for this, you good-for-nothing cur!

Willie Ah, Mrs Reck -

Martha   Don't Mrs Reck me, you!
If you had took the whip to that one there
(*Pointing to Robert*) While he was still a lad, and biddable,
He wouldn't have ideas above his station,
Thinking he could court that girl of mine.

Willie: It will be fixed-

Martha: What? Fixed? You'll fix my jug?

Willie: We're only simple people, Mrs Reck.

Martha: You may be simple, Willie Temple, yes,
But that lad had his eye on higher things.

Robert (*pointing to Eve*): If you call this thing higher-

Martha: What! The cheek!

Lynch: Now listen, Missus, and you, Temple, too,
All of you, listen. I brought you this way
In order to avoid that crowd there.
If you want everyone to know your business,
Then go on, shout, so all the town can hear.

Martha: All I want is my rights.

Robert: You'll have them, sure.
Willie: If you can show it was my boy that broke
The jug then we'll make restitution.

Martha: What,
Will you make restitution for what's broke?

Willie: We will replace the jug-

Martha: Replace it, will you?
You'll mend what's broken, put all back intact?

Robert: You have a wicked mind, and that's the truth.

Martha: And you have wicked ways: I've hear the tales
Of you and your fine ways - Oho, I have!
Out drinking half the night and plotting war.

Robert: That kind of careless talk is dangerous.

Martha: John Lynch, you hear him, how he threatens me?

Willie: You know he's off to join the army, ma'am.

Martha: Oh yes? What army, though, I'd like to know.

Willie glances anxiously at Lynch

Willie: My lad's no rebel, Mrs Reck.

Martha: Oh no?

Willie: I don't know why you've got in such a state.
I've said we'll compensate you for the jug.

Martha: You'll compensate me, will you? Oh, that's grand.
And how, pray, will you do it? Whose tenant are you?
You think I don't know how things stand with you?
You owe me six months' rent in hanging gale,
And yet you talk to me of compensation?

Robert: Don't mind her, da: it's not the broken jug
That has her riz, but that I've seen at last
The kind of girl her charming daughter is.
(*To Eve*) You've had a right lend out of me, you have,
Pretending you were inexperienced.
If you think that I'd marry you, you slut-

This scene is the audience's introduction to the wider set of characters. As is clear from the disparity in length, Banville adds a significant amount of material here. Firstly, his characters refer to each other by name frequently, setting up the strong impression that the characters have known each other for a long time - this is confirmed by Martha's reference to Robert as a lad (we might presume she knew him in this time period) and their relationship as landlady and tenant. There is a strong suggestion of class tension, which is complicated by the specific political situation whereby the dispute is between a Protestant landlady (whose ancestors were of English origin) and a Catholic native Irish tenant. Adam himself is, as by this point the audience knows, a landlord also, with his land divided in conacre (the letting by a tenant of small portions of land prepared for crops or grazing), and Adam acting as if this is a charitable action on his part towards the 'scroungers' (peasant tenants). The modern-day Irish audience is likely to be aware that this conacre system, which involved tenants farming a small patch of land for their family's food in exchange for working for the landlord, was a direct cause of the Famine, since the potato was the only vegetable that could be grown on little land in sufficient abundance, resulting in a monoculture that was then devastated by the potato

blight. Thus, landlords and tenants in this period of Irish history not only have the power relations one would usually expect of this relationship but point towards a very specific example of abuse and fatal consequences. Also prominent is the suggestion that Robert Temple is an Irish rebel, a very dangerous accusation to have made against one, especially in front of state authorities. These accusations are extremely harsh and violent; the anger that is clear in the source text is emphasised and given further motivations here, with the stage directions explicitly noting the fear that Robert's father feels on behalf of his son: 'Willie glances anxiously at Lynch'.

The jug itself is not a prominent feature of Banville's version of this extract, and, as in the source text, neither is Eve at this point - she is yet to speak and has been referred to only as 'thing' and 'slut'.

In contrast to Banville's version, the jug is important in Constantine's text. He employs some word play here, in Frau Marthe's speech, based on the following pairings: jug and judge, place and replace, mend and make amends. The latter two cases are fairly straightforward; the link between 'jug' and 'judge' merits further analysis. The connection predominantly comes from their similar sounds, making this a feature of the target text which would be particularly noticeable if the play were staged or read aloud. The similar graphical forms of the words on the page would nevertheless probably suffice to allow the careful reader to make the connection. Constantine succeeds in highlighting the uselessness of judgement and the judicial system in the repairing of the jug with this word-play. Despite the apparently "happy endings" of the source text and Constantine's target text, by the play's conclusion neither jug nor judge is sound: as Constantine's Frau Marthe asks, 'Shall this jug here go without justice done it?' (65). Banville, in our interview, claims that his interest in *Der zerbrochne*

Krug primarily lies in its iconoclasm: its juxtaposition of the physical breaking of an object or image and the metaphorical breaking of an object or image. As a German Studies academic, Constantine is, of course, also aware of this interpretation of the play. The iconoclasm in the text will be analysed with regard to Banville's target text in Chapter 4. As far as Constantine is concerned, at this stage in my discussion I wish to highlight the pessimism his translation choices demonstrate with regard to the justice system. By aurally connecting 'jug' and 'judge', Constantine emphasises the impression created in the source text that, despite the dismissal of the corrupt judge, abuses of power will continue. The system itself is corrupt, and typically rewards self-serving corruption over the pursuit of "true" justice.

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Much more remains to be said on the subject of *Der zerbrochne Krug* and the target texts composed by Banville and Constantine. The texts will reappear in my analysis throughout the following chapters. For now, I will proceed to a close reading of Kleist's *Amphitryon*, Banville's *God's Gift*, and Constantine's *Amphitryon*.

3. A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF SCENES FROM KLEIST'S *AMPHITRYON* AND ITS TARGET TEXTS BY BANVILLE AND CONSTANTINE

In this chapter I will quote two extracts from the source and target texts at some length. This is partly to afford the reader a better grasp of Kleist and Constantine's syntax, the impression of which will be weaker if examples are analysed in isolation. Furthermore, *Amphitryon* is a text which especially foregrounds disorientation, confusion and a fractured sense of self, and this is partly expressed through the syntax. This therefore makes the above motivation especially relevant. In addition, Banville's target text transposes the action of the play to the Battle of Vinegar Hill, the 1798 Irish rebellion against British rule. As will be seen in the first Banville extract quoted below, the opening scene of *God's Gift* provides a useful introduction to this background, as well as to the fourth-wall-breaking, self-reflexive speech uttered by Banville's Mercury. These concerns will form the basis of significant points within my analysis, and therefore it is, I hope, beneficial and efficient for the reader of this thesis to have access to extended passages from the texts.

Kleist's *Amphitryon* (1807) is, interestingly, an adaptation itself: Kleist used as its basis a 1668 version by Molière, but significantly altered it, drawing out and greatly expanding upon the elements of the play that deal with the characters' crises of knowledge. Kleist's version is a play with significant comic elements - slapstick and confusion brought about by mistaken identity - but also a text with what critics have recognised as a deeply tragic element: namely, the characters' inability to trust their own senses and the profound loss of self that provokes. Regarding Alcmene, Constantine comments: 'a woman is subjected to a severe, not to say sadistic, inquisition' (from his notes on his target text in the *Selected Writings* 1997:431). The

paratextual information he provides in endnotes for the reader of his translation stresses the suffering of the characters in the play - particularly Alcmene - and notes that this is a departure from the focus of Molière's version (ibid.).

The plot is rather complicated: in Ancient Thebes, Amphitryon is a general, returning home from a successful battle campaign. He arrives at home but is confused, angered and distraught to find that his wife, Alcmene, claims to have already spent the previous night in bed with him. Alcmene is adamant that the man she slept with the night before was her husband; Amphitryon knows that that cannot be the case. What none of the mortal characters know is that the god Jupiter came to their house the night before, in the form of Amphitryon, precisely in order to sleep with Alcmene, with Mercury, the god, accompanying him, in the form of Amphitryon's servant, Sosias. The play follows the characters as the mortals attempt to make sense of what has happened and the immortals remain in their forms, and continue to confuse them. In the final scene of the play, after Amphitryon is confronted with the sight of Jupiter in Amphitryon's form, Jupiter reveals his true identity; Amphitryon asks Jupiter to bless them with a divine child; and Alcmene is left in the position of not only finding herself pregnant by a being she never knew she had slept with, but also consequently now unable to trust in her innermost convictions. In this way Kleist questions and challenges the Enlightenment context from which his play emerged, with a focus on the unknowableness of the world. Kleist's play may not be set in Enlightenment Germany, but its key ideas are very much a product of or, rather, reaction to it.

Banville's version has, once again, adapted its setting, moving from Ancient Thebes to the Ireland of 1798. Amphitryon is now Ashburningham, a British general; his wife, Minna; his servant, Souse, who is Irish.

Act One, Scene One and Act One, Scene Two

Kleist (2013:247-50)

Es ist Nacht.

Sosias: (*tritt mit einer Laterne auf*)
Heda! Wer schleicht da? Holla! – Wenn der Tag
Anbräche, wär mirs lieb; die Nacht ist – Was?
Gut Freund, ihr Herrn! Wir gehen eine Straße –
Ihr habt den ehrlichsten Gesell'n getroffen,
Bei meiner Treu, auf den die Sonne scheint –
Vielmehr der Mond jetzt, wollt ich sagen –
Spitzbuben sinds entweder, feige Schufte,
Die nicht das Herz, mich anzugreifen, haben:
Oder der Wind hat durch das Laub gerasselt.
Jedweder Schall hier heult in dem Gebirge. –
Vorsichtig! Langsam! – Aber wenn ich jetzt
Nicht bald mit meinem Hut an Theben stoße,
So will ich in den finstern Orkus fahren.
Ei, hols der Henker! ob ich mutig bin,
Ein Mann von Herz; das hätte mein Gebieter
Auf anderm Wege auch erproben können.
Ruhm krönt ihn, spricht die ganze Welt, und Ehre,
Doch in der Mitternacht mich fortzuschicken,
Ist nicht viel besser, als ein schlechter Streich.
Ein wenig Rücksicht wär, und Nächstenliebe,
So lieb mir, als der Keil von Tugenden,
Mit welchem er des Feindes Reihen sprengt.
Sosias, sprach er, rüste dich mein Diener,
Du sollst in Theben meinen Sieg verkünden
Und meine zärtliche Gebieterin
Von meiner nahen Ankunft unterrichten.
Doch hätte das nicht Zeit gehabt bis morgen,
Will ich ein Pferd sein, ein gesatteltes!
Doch sieh! Da zeigt sich, denk ich, unser Haus!
Triumph, du bist nunmehr am Ziel, Sosias,
Und allen Feinden soll vergeben sein.
Jetzt, Freund, mußt du an deinen Auftrag denken;
Man wird dich feierlich zur Fürstin führen,
Alkmen', und den Bericht bist du ihr dann,
Vollständig und mit Rednerkunst gesetzt
Des Treffens schuldig, das Amphitryon
Siegreich fürs Vaterland geschlagen hat.
– Doch wie zum Teufel mach ich das, da ich
Dabei nicht war? Verwünscht. Ich wollt: ich hätte
Zuweilen aus dem Zelt geguckt,

Als beide Heer im Handgemenge waren.
Ei was! Vom Hauen sprech ich dreist und Schießen,
Und werde schlechter nicht bestehn, als andre,
Die auch den Pfeil noch pfeifen nicht gehört. –
Doch wär es gut, wenn du die Rolle übtest?
Gut! Gut bemerkt, Sosias! Prüfe dich.
Hier soll der Audienzsaal sein, und diese
Latern Alkmene, die mich auf dem Thron erwartet.
Er setzt die Laterne auf den Boden.
Durchlauchtigste! mich schickt Amphitryon,
Mein hoher Herr und Euer edler Gatte,
Von seinem Siege über die Athener
Die frohe Zeitung Euch zu überbringen.
– Ein guter Anfang! – »Ach, wahrhaftig, liebster
Sosias, meine Freude mäßg' ich nicht,
Da ich dich wiedersehe.« – Diese Güte,
Vortreffliche, beschämt mich, wenn sie stolz gleich
Gewiß jedweden andern machen würde.
– Sieh! das ist auch nicht übel! – »Und dem teuren
Geliebten meiner Seel Amphitryon,
Wie gehts ihm?« – Gnädge Frau, das faß ich kurz:
Wie einem Mann von Herzen auf dem Feld des Ruhms!
– Ein Blitzkerl! Seht die Suade! – »Wann denn kommt er?«
Gewiß nicht später, als sein Amt verstattet,
Wenn gleich vielleicht so früh nicht, als er wünscht.
–Potz, alle Welt! – »Und hat er sonst dir nichts
Für mich gesagt, Sosias?« – Er sagt wenig,
Tut viel, und es erbebt die Welt vor seinem Namen.
– Daß mich die Pest! Wo kömmt der Witz mir her?
»Sie weichen also, sagst du, die Athener?«
– Sie weichen, tot ist Labdakus, ihr Führer,
Erstürmt Pharissa, und wo Berge sind,
Da hallen sie von unserm Siegsgeschrei. –
»O teuerster Sosias! Sieh, das mußt du
Umständlich mir, auf jeden Zug, erzählen.«
– Ich bin zu Euern Diensten, gnädge Frau.
Denn in der Tat kann ich von diesem Siege
Vollständge Auskunft, schmeichl' ich mir, erteilen:
Stellt Euch, wenn Ihr die Güte haben wollt,
Auf dieser Seite hier – *(Er bezeichnet die Örter auf seiner Hand)* Pharissa vor
– Was eine Stadt ist, wie Ihr wissen werdet,
So groß im Umfang, praeter propter,
Um nicht zu übertreiben, wenn nicht größer,
Als Theben. Hier geht der Fluß. Die Unsrigen
In Schlachtordnung auf einem Hügel hier;
Und dort im Tale haufenweis der Feind.
Nachdem er ein Gelübd zum Himmel jetzt gesendet,
Daß Euch der Wolkenkreis erzitterte,

Stürzt, die Befehle treffend rings gegeben,
Er gleich den Strömen brausend auf uns ein.
Wir aber, minder tapfer nicht, wir zeigten
Den Rückweg ihm, – und Ihr sollt gleich sehn, wie?
Zuerst begegnet' er dem Vortrab hier;
Der wich. Dann stieß er auf die Bogenschützen dort;
Die zogen sich zurück. Jetzt dreist gemacht, rückt er
Den Schleudrern auf den Leib; die räumten ihm das Feld
Und als verwegen jetzt dem Hauptkorps er sich nahte,
Stürzt dies – halt! Mit dem Hauptkorps ists nicht richtig.
Ich höre ein Geräusch dort, wie mir deucht.

Zweite Szene

Merkur tritt in der Gestalt des Sosias aus Amphitryons Haus.

Merkur (*für sich*): Wenn ich den ungerufnen Schlingel dort
Beizeiten nicht von diesem Haus entferne,
So steht, beim Styx, das Glück mir auf dem Spiel,
Das in Alkmenens Armen zu genießen,
Heut in der Truggestalt Amphitryons
Zeus der Olympische, zur Erde stieg.

Constantine (1997:66-9)

It is night
Enter Sosias carrying a lantern

Sosias: Who's there? Who's that there creeping? Hoy! - I'd be
Happier if daybreak broke. The night is… What?
Friend, gentlemen. Your road is mine -
The man you've met is the most honest man,
You take my word for it, under the sun,
Or moon, more like, under the moon, I meant…
Either it's villains and they're cowardly wretched
Not man enough to set upon me
Or it was the wind, making the leaves rustle.
The least sound echoes round the mountains here.
Steady now. Slowly. - But if I don't soon
Hit up against the walls of Thebes
I'll carry on to blackest hell instead.
God string me up, whether I'm brave or not
And have some stomach, there were other ways
My lord and master might have tried to find that out.
Fame crowns his head, the whole world says, and honour.
Sending me out in the middle of the night however
Is a poor sort of joke. Some thoughtfulness

And love thy neighbour as thyself would be as welcome
As that great fist of other virtues
He smashes enemies to pieces with.
Sosias, he said, be up and doing, servant.
You are to announce my victory in Thebes
And warn the gentle ruler of my heart
That my arrival home is imminent.
Wouldn't tomorrow have been time enough?
I'll be a horse and saddle up, if not.
See though. Looks like our house appearing.
You have arrived, Sosias. Victory!
Forgiveness now to all your enemies.
And now, friend, think of your commission:
You will be brought, with ceremony, to the lady
Alcmene, and the account, in every detail
And properly composed, you owe her of the battle
Won for the country by Amphitryon.
-How shall I, how the devil, not having been
Present myself? Oh damn. I wish I'd peeped
Out of the tent occasionally
When the two sides were at it hand to hand.
So what! I'll speak of blows and bolts
And shan't do any worse than others have
Who also heard the arrows whizz. -
Still, best rehearse the part. Well thought of,
Sosias, excellent. See how you do.
Here's where I'll be received and this lantern's
Alcmene, on her throne, awaiting me.
(He places the lantern on the ground)
Worshipful lady, Amphitryon,
My lord and master and your noble husband
Sends you, by me, the happy tidings of
His victory over the Athenians. -
A good beginning! - 'Ah, truly, dearest
Sosias, my joy at seeing you again
Is uncontainable.' - Your kindness,
Excellent lady, humbles me though certainly
Anyone else it would swell up with pride.
-And that's not bad either! - 'And the dear
Beloved of my soul, Amphitryon,
How is he?' - Great lady, I'll be brief: He is
As a man of courage on the field of honour is.
-Hear that! The language! - 'When is he coming then?'
Surely no later than his duty allows
Though doubtless not so soon as he would wish.
Well, strike me dead! - 'And there was nothing more,
He said to you for me?' - He says little,
Does much, and the earth quakes at his name.

- Pox carry me off! Where's it all coming from? -
'They yield then, so you say, the Athenians?'
- 'They yield, and Labdacus is dead, their leader,
Pharissa's taken and where there are mountains
They echo with our shouts of victory. -
'Oh dearest Sosias, see here, all this
You must recount to me in every detail.'
- Lady, I'm at your service, for indeed
I can, I flatter myself, furnish you with
The whole news of this victory.
Picture, if you will be so kind,
On this side here -
(He indicates the places on his hand)
                    Pharissa
- Which is a city as you doubtless know
As large in compass, *praeter propter*,
Without exaggerating, if not larger
Than Thebes. Here is the river. Our men
In battle order on an eminence here,
And in the valley there, in droves, the foe.
First sending up to heaven such a vow
As made the encircling clouds tremble,
They teem, having their orders dealt them out,
Like rivers on us with a roar.
But we, no less brave, showed them
Their way back - and how we did, you'll see.
Here first of all they met our front men
Who gave. Then hit against the archers here
Who backed away. Then going on boldly
They pressed the slings men, who let them come, and now
Full of presumption, nearing our main corps,
These fall - Stop! With the main corps something's wrong.
I hear a noise there, as it seems to me.

Act 1, Scene 2

Mercury, in the form of Sosias, comes out of Amphitryon's house

Mercury: (*aside*) If I don't speedily remove
That lout and nuisance from this door
By Styx the happiness is put at risk
For whose enjoyment in Alcmene's arms
This day, in the appearance of Amphitryon,
Zeus, the Olympian, came down to earth.

Banville (2000:11-7)

Forecourt of Ashburningham House. The gloom before dawn. Enter Souse, with a lantern.

Souse: O God! Who's there? Come out and show yourself!
There's no one, seemingly, and yet I thought -
It must have been the wind among the leaves.
This endless night is playing tricks on me.
My head is addled, and I'm seeing things.
An hour ago, or more, the dawn came up:
The sun appeared, and then went down again,
As if some hand had pulled it by a string!
Now my poor lamp is nearly out of oil.
But here's the house, and here's the courtyard, too.
There's not a window lit, all still asleep -
Hold up, I see a candle flickering;
(He counts the windows) One two, three four: it's Lady Minna's room.
She's sleepless, pining for her man. O my!
I could dress up as him, and slip in there,
Between those nice warm sheets, and comfort her -
(Mimics his master's voice) 'By Jupiter, my dear, I've missed you sore!'
(Mimics Minna's voice) 'O darling! my divine one! sore's the word!'
Go easy, Souse, keep thoughts like that at bay,
Unless you want a hiding, for I swear,
Sometimes I think the Boss can read my mind.
I don't know why he had to send me here,
At night, along these roads, with rebels out.
In search of heads to stick up on their pikes.
'Go home,' says he, 'go home and tell my wife,
The war is won - the so-called war, that is -
That Vinegar Hill runs red with rebel blood,
That Boovalogue is burning, and that at
The Harrow their "brave" Father Murphy fled.
Describe it all,' he tells me, 'say how well
We fought, and how we held the day against
That pack of rabble!' Oh, I'm sure they did,
I'm sure the Redcoats didn't give an inch,
Though all they had were muskets and the odd
Fourteen-inch cannon, while the other side
Were armed up to the teeth with pikes and sticks.
Oh yes, no doubt it was a splendid sight,
And one I would have seen, if I had thought
To put my head out of the Boss's tent,
Where I was in a struggle of my own,
Attacking that fine ham the Boss had left
Unguarded when he went to face the foe.
Begob, that was a skirmish - but hold hard!

There's someone there! - there is! - O, holy God!

Enter Mercury, in the form of Souse

Mercury: *(Aside)* I'd better get this day begun, or else
Their little world will be all out of tune;
(Sarcastic) It's usually so harmonious.
Souse: You there!
Mercury: Who's this? O course, it would be *him*.
I'd better get the rascal out of here,
Before he wakes the household up -
(To Souse) Well, friend?
Souse *(Aside)* Who is it, who? I seem to know his face.
I hope he's not a rebel, or I'm caught,
It's said they save the worst deaths for their own.

[...]

Mercury: *(Checking himself, he turns to the audience)*
But you must all be thoroughly confused;
Let me explain. My name is Mercury;
I mean, that is the name men call me by.
You see my magic staff, my golden helm -
But no, of course: you're mortals, therefore blind.
You'll have to take my word for all of this.
[...]
My father, Jupiter, the god of gods,
I blush to say, is up to his old tricks.
Yes, it's a girl again: the Lady Minna

I will begin my discussion of *Amphitryon*, as I did with *Der zerbrochne Krug*, by

analysing Constantine's syntax. Constantine's desire to produce English 'haunted and

affected by the strangeness of [Kleist's] original' (1997:xxvi) correlates to his general

conception of translation as producing a kind of language he terms, following Robert

Graves, 'Otherwhereish':

> It's worth bearing in mind that all poetic language is more or less 'foreign',
> sounds as though it has come through translation from elsewhere. Robert
> Graves calls it 'Otherwhereish' [...]
>
> the language of poetry is very often akin to - in fact you could almost say it is -
> the language of translation, because it's coming from elsewhere. So that

strangeness, anything you do that reduces it is bad; on the other hand, anything you do that pushes it into such strangeness that people are just going to say 'Well, that means nothing to me because I don't understand where the words go'. I'm not talking about a happy medium really, I'm talking about going as far as you can in it, to the edge of it not just becoming uncouth, barbaric and unintelligible (appendix B)

In the opening of Constantine's target text of *Amphitryon* we encounter the English author's version of 'Otherwhereish'. Strangeness emerges in the syntax. Consider examples from the following passage:

Sosias: Who's there? Who's that there creeping? Hoy! - I'd be
Happier if daybreak broke. The night is… What?
Friend, gentlemen. Your road is mine -
The man you've met is the most honest man,
You take my word for it, under the sun,
Or moon, more like, under the moon, I meant…

The language reflects the "breaking off", disorientating nature of the source text. It almost qualifies as an example of the 'aneinandervorbeireden' that Constantine identifies as being particularly Kleistian (appendix B), even though, at this point, Sosias is apparently alone. There is irony in the fact that Sosias is both talking to (or for) himself here and talking to the mysterious stranger - the 'friend' - who is, in fact, the god Mercury, and who will take the form of Sosias' double when they meet. In this way, Sosias is already both talking to himself and talking to another who is, in fact, himself. It is no wonder that such immediate existential disorientation should be reflected in broken syntax. Several sets of linguistically repetitive structures - 'Who's there? Who's that there creeping?', 'daybreak broke', 'The man […] is the most honest man' and 'moon, more like, under the moon' - convey Souse's hesitation, and this tendency continues throughout the passage. This repetition device is not seen to this extent in the extracts from the source text or from Banville's target text.

Constantine's translation of the report of battle consists of a chiasmus that is marked in its deviation from everyday speech:

> Our men
> In battle order on an eminence here,
> And in the valley there, in droves, the foe.

As was the case for his *The Broken Jug*, the syntax demands a certain level of concentration, almost decoding, from the reader.

An aspect of German syntax that is frequently commented upon by those familiar with the language is the existence of grammatical structures that send the verb to the end of the clause. Indeed, both Banville and Constantine mentioned this type of structure to me when our discussion moved to the linguistic differences between English and German (see appendices). The highly inflected nature of German, of which this is a symptom, allows for subordinate clauses to accumulate, to the extent that the reveal of the most significant element of a sentence may be delayed until a sentence's final words. In Kleist's case, this technique is used to great effect, with this deferred significance often installing a "surprise" factor into his sentences. The following passage is an example of Constantine's approach to translating this feature. The "surprise" element - Zeus coming down to earth - is held back by Kleist until the end of the sentence. Constantine responds in kind, with the section from 'in Alcmene's arms' to 'Amphitryon' causing an especially prominent delay. Again, this causes a word order that is perhaps even more unusual to the English reader than it would be for the German reader of Kleist's text.

> Mercury: (*aside*) If I don't speedily remove
> That lout and nuisance from this door
> By Styx the happiness is put at risk
> For whose enjoyment in Alcmene's arms

> This day, in the appearance of Amphitryon,
> Zeus, the Olympian, came down to earth.

Comparison with the patently different style of the speech of Banville's Mercury makes this effect obvious.

Constantine's target text contains a mixture of both antiquated and more modern language. An example of the former is 'Hoy!', which is not an exclamation that is to be heard every day on the typical British high street. An example of the opposing tendency that can fruitfully be explored is his use of 'blackest hell' in response to the source text's 'Orcus'. Typically, Constantine does not shy away from classical references. Later in this passage his Sosias uses the term *praeter propter*, and exclaims 'By Styx', to which Constantine adds an endnote for clarification.

I would argue, therefore, that it is a noteworthy choice to have substituted 'hell' for 'Orcus' here. Whether Constantine's considerations were primarily of the metrical kind here, I do not know. Interestingly, however, there is also a notable substitution in favour of 'hell' in the first scene of Constantine's *Broken Jug*. The mention of hell in the first scene of Constantine's *Amphitryon* could, of course, refer to a classical hell, not necessarily that of Christianity. The setting is undeniably classical, and the mention of Thebes in the previous line will put the reader in that frame of mind. However, the 'God string me up' for 'Hols der Henker' is firmly within the Christian tradition, which believes in a singular God, as is the reference that follows soon after:

> But if I don't soon
> Hit up against the walls of Thebes
> I'll carry on to blackest hell instead.
> God string me up
> […]
> Some thoughtfulness
> And love thy neighbour as thyself would be as welcome
> As that great fist of other virtues
> He smashes enemies to pieces with.

Consider also, with reference to similar phrasing found in Constantine's *The Broken Jug*:

> How shall I, how the devil, not having been
> Present myself? Oh damn.

One could make the argument that the common English-language version of this phrase (exclaiming 'the devil' rather than '*to* the devil' (zum Teufel)) invites an increased level of association between the speaker and the singular, Christian devil.

The following section of analysis of Constantine's *Amphitryon* will analyse particular vocabulary choices made by the translator in this extract. When Kleist's Sosias exclaims 'Seht die Suade!' in relation to his own powers of oratory, his Constantinean counterpart cries 'The language!'. As an isolated case this is perhaps not significant; however 'language' is a word that will continue to reappear throughout the target text. For 'Welch ein Wort?', Constantine translates 'What a language!' (103); and for 'Was sprichst du da?', Constantine chooses 'What language is this?' (79; quoted in the next extract). It seems almost superfluous to state here that, to Constantine - lifelong author, translator and literary critic - language is important, but it is a potentially illuminating point to remember when encountering the word itself in his text. As will be demonstrated later in this thesis, Constantine is highly aware of the social function language can have. As he states, citizens who engage with literature and careful, deliberate use of language are apt to be critical thinkers. He takes inspiration from 'the Greeks, [who] thought the citizens benefitted by going to the theatre and coming back into civic life' (appendix B). Quoting Orwell, he states that 'the quality of your thinking is in large measure governed by the quality of the language you have at your disposal' (ibid.). If language has social and political implications, it also inherently has power. *Amphitryon* is a play in which the particularities of human

language are of utmost importance, even to a god, as will be seen in a subsequent extract.

An example of the impact of the temporal difference between Kleist's time and 1997 can be seen in Constantine's decision to translate 'das Vaterland' as 'the country'. This decision is repeated in Act 1 Scene 4, where Constantine translates 'Vaterland' as 'our native country'. This, I would speculate, can be explained by Constantine's desire to act in service to the source text:

> HT: Were there any particular themes you wanted to emphasise in any of the translations?

> DC: I translated the text as closely as I could, so the sense of it and its 'emphases' were, I hoped, according to my understanding, Kleist's (appendix B)

Constantine is not keen to introduce deliberately any new emphases to the text, which references to the 'Fatherland' arguably will for most English readers. Associations with Nazism are not only likely but almost unavoidable. The effect of Constantine's removal of this term is to avoid distracting his reader. I do not mean to make a value judgement about this choice; retaining the term 'Fatherland' in an English translation could provoke interesting new readings. An example of an author taking the opposite approach to Constantine when adapting a Kleist text has been discussed in the introduction to this thesis. Dennis Kelly's 2010 adaptation of *Prinz Friedrich von Homburg* deliberately tapped into mentions of the Fatherland, using them as a shorthand to allow the audience to situate the action and themes of his target text within the framework of an authoritarian state (Tatlow 2016).

Banville's opening establishes some key aspects of his text: for example, the artificiality of the staging. 'The sun appeared, and then went down again, / As if some hand had pulled it by a string!' In Act One, Scene Two, Banville's stage directions

read: 'a cardboard sun pops into the sky'. We might plausibly speculate that this aspect

is emphasised partly due to the production context: Banville wrote this target text

specifically for the theatre company Barrabas, whose self-reflexive, alienating

production of *The Whiteheaded Boy* he had previously enjoyed (appendix A). In the

previous chapter I discussed Banville's admiration of the pantomime, and the existence

of *God's Gift* goes some way to proving that admiration. Banville's Mercury, who

breaks the fourth wall, speaking to the audience frequently to make sarcastic comments

on the action of the play, and functioning as a quasi authorial presence on stage, adds to

the sly knowingness of the text. As a staging of an impossible situation (the actors

playing the gods cannot miraculously change their physical appearances to resemble

the mortal characters perfectly), Kleist's text demands the suspension of disbelief, and

Banville's target text does not pretend otherwise. In a play like *God's Gift*, naturalism

does not apply.

Banville links the concept of self-reflexive theatre particularly to the notion of the

double, and it is no surprise that it makes the generic leap to feature also in *The*

Infinities, Banville's novel based on *Amphitryon* ('what a make-believe world it seems

sometimes, no more than a child's bright daub' (2009:86)).

Analysis of Banville's statements in interview provides further evidence on this

point:

> HT: In your work there's a lot of discussion about identity, ghosts, and quite
> strong parallels with *Amphitryon*. [...]
>
> JB: I've always been fascinated by the notion of the double, the twin. And in
> *Amphitryon*, it's so cleverly done. Again, as I say, he's basing it on ancient
> models, but it's so cleverly brought off, the way in which people keep coming
> in and going. When we did it here [laughs] the gods were wearing nothing but
> elaborate babies' nappies. But they would come on and the characters would
> say, 'Amphitryon!', 'Yes, I am Amphitryon'. Again I come back to the word

'ambiguity'. It seems to me that ambiguity is the essence of Kleist, we never know where we are.

I find it noteworthy that, when questioned about ghosts and identity within his oeuvre, and with reference to *Amphitryon* in particular, Banville's mind goes immediately to the comic, pantomime-esque nature of *God's Gift*, and then links that to the perhaps more serious matter of the ambiguity that he determines to be Kleist's 'essence'. It is overwhelmingly clear that, for Banville, these issues are profoundly and inextricably linked.

A key source of humour in the source and target texts is irony. Constantine's target text exploits irony when, with reference to Mercury, he translates 'nicht das Herz haben' as 'not man enough'. Mercury, we soon discover, is a god; he is literally not man enough. Banville also makes the most of the source text's potential for irony. When his Souse thinks he hears someone (Mercury, the god, but Souse does not know this): he exclaims 'O God!' and again later 'O, holy God!'. Souse sees that Minna is awake because her light is on, and, again via an exclamation, inadvertently states what is actually happening:

> *(Mimics his master's voice)* 'By Jupiter, my dear, I've missed you sore!'
> *(Mimics Minna's voice)* 'O darling! my divine one! sore's the word!'

Vulgarity is prominent in *God's Gift*. This bawdiness and innuendo should, straightforwardly, prompt laughter, as in a pantomime, but this issue merits further investigation. I discussed, in Chapter 2, Banville's desire to emulate Kleist's vulgarity 'in the best sense of the term', and avoid gratuitous 'ivory-towerism'. I will situate here that quote within its context in our interview:

> HT: Were you adapting for a particular audience?
> JB: Yes, I was adapting for an audience here.

HT: Was there anything in your writing that changed because of that? Adding more humour, perhaps? They are very funny, there are a lot of jokes.

JB: Yeah, and there are a lot of crude jokes. But I think Kleist himself was quite crude, he recognised- he was vulgar in the best sense of the term - he was of the people, he tried to be, and I try to be as well. I mean people needn't think I live in an ivory tower - I want to be popular, but unfortunately I've got a reputation for ivory-towerism. (appendix A)

When speaking during a 2010 interview on the related matter of corporeality, Banville remarks:

But very few philosophers, with the remarkable exception of Nietzsche, give due recognition to the fact that we are not pure spirit trapped in a mere body, but that body and spirit have an equal weight. So, again, I think this is one of the great things that art does, one of its duties is to remind people about, as you say, our corporeal, our physicality, that we're not just brains trapped in this grotesque thing. The grotesque thing, so-called, that this body is as much a part of us as our minds, and is as much a part of our personality as our minds are. I mean, I love that scene [in *The Infinities*] where Helen is going to the lavatory in the morning. I really enjoyed writing that, because I wanted to… I wasn't making a point of any kind, I just wanted to show that this is what people do every morning. I'm not saying we should dwell on this, since it's not a particularly pleasant aspect of our lives. But it is an aspect of our lives that we should not try to ignore and push aside. [...] Well, of course the gods envy this. (2010)

That his texts - typically full of abstraction and metaphor - are grounded by real-life everyday events is important to Banville's strategy, and might provide an explanation for his choice to transpose the settings of his target texts to Ireland. It would make sense that Banville would transport the action to the vulgus - people - he and his audience know best: his own people, the people of Ireland.

A similar discussion can be had in relation to Constantine's work, which is characterised by the use of concrete images to explore abstractions. This will be investigated in Chapter 5.

Act One, Scene Four

Kleist (2013:260-2)

Jupiter: Geliebte! Wie du mich entzückst! Doch eine
Besorgnis auch erregst du mir, die ich,

So scherzhaft sie auch klingt, dir nennen muß.
Du weißt, daß ein Gesetz der Ehe ist,
Und eine Pflicht, und daß, wer Liebe nicht erwirbt,
Noch Liebe vor dem Richter fordern kann.
Sieh dies Gesetz, es stört mein schönstes Glück.
Dir möcht ich, deinem Herzen, Teuerste,
Jedwede Gunst verdanken, möchte gern
Nicht, daß du einer Förmlichkeit dich fügtest,
Zu der du dich vielleicht verbunden wähnst.
Wie leicht verscheuchst du diese kleinen Zweifel?
So öffne mir dein Innres denn, und sprich,
Ob den Gemahl du heut, dem du verlobt bist,
Ob den Geliebten du empfangen hast?
Alkmene: Geliebter und Gemahl! Was sprichst du da?
Ist es dies heilige Verhältnis nicht,
Das mich allein, dich zu empfahn, berechtigt?
Wie kann dich ein Gesetz der Welt nur quälen,
Das weit entfernt, beschränkend hier zu sein,
Vielmehr den kühnsten Wünschen, die sich regen,
Jedwede Schranke glücklich niederreißt?
Jupiter: Was ich dir fühle, teuerste Alkmene,
Das überflügelt, sieh, um Sonnenferne,
Was ein Gemahl dir schuldig ist. Entwöhne,
Geliebte, von dem Gatten dich,
Und unterscheide zwischen mir und ihm.
Sie schmerzt mich, diese schmähliche Verwechslung,
Und der Gedanke ist mir unerträglich,
Daß du den Laffen bloß empfangen hast,
Der kalt ein Recht auf dich zu haben wähnt.
Ich möchte dir, mein süßes Licht,
Dies Wesen eigner Art erschienen sein,
Besieger dein, weil über dich zu siegen,
Die Kunst, die großen Götter mich gelehrt.
Wozu den eitlen Feldherrn der Thebaner
Einmischen hier, der für ein großes Haus
Jüngst eine reiche Fürstentochter freite?
Was sagst du? Sieh, ich möchte deine Tugend
Ihm, jenem öffentlichen Gecken, lassen,
Und mir, mir deine Liebe vorbehalten.
Alkmene: Amphitryon! Du scherzest. Wenn das Volk hier
Auf den Amphitryon dich schmähen hörte,
Es müßte doch dich einen andern wähnen,
Ich weiß nicht wen? Nicht, daß es mir entschlüpft
In dieser heitern Nacht, wie, vor dem Gatten,
Oft der Geliebte aus sich zeichnen kann;
Doch da die Götter eines und das andre
In dir mir einigten, verzeih ich diesem
Von Herzen gern, was der vielleicht verbrach.

Jupiter: Versprich mir denn, daß dieses heitre Fest,
Das wir jetzt frohem Wiedersehn gefeiert,
Dir nicht aus dem Gedächtnis weichen soll;
Daß du den Göttertag, den wir durchlebt,
Geliebteste, mit deiner weitern Ehe
Gemeinen Tag'lauf nicht verwechseln willst.
Versprich, sag ich, daß du an mich willst denken,
Wenn einst Amphitryon zurücke kehrt –?
Alkmene: Nun ja. Was soll man dazu sagen?
Jupiter: Dank dir!
Es hat mehr Sinn und Deutung, als du glaubst.
Leb wohl, mich ruft die Pflicht.
Alkmene: So willst du fort?
Nicht diese kurze Nacht bei mir, Geliebter,
Die mir zehntausend Schwingen fleucht, vollenden?
Jupiter: Schien diese Nacht dir kürzer als die andern?
Alkmene: Ach!
Jupiter: Süßes Kind! Es konnte doch Aurora
Für unser Glück nicht mehr tun, als sie tat.
Leb wohl. Ich sorge, daß die anderen
Nicht länger dauern, als die Erde braucht.
Alkmene: Er ist berauscht, glaub ich. Ich bin es auch. *Ab.*

Constantine (1997:79-81)

Jupiter: Beloved, how you enchant me, But
One worry you arouse in me which I,
Frivolous though it may sound, must speak of.
You know there is a law in marriage and
A duty too and should a man not win love
Going before a judge he may demand it.
This law, do you see, it mars my highest happiness.
To you yourself, your heart, my dearest
I want all favours owed and do not want
You fitting yourself to some formality
Perhaps believing you are bound to it.
These trivial doubts you may dispel with ease.
Speak from your secret heart and say
Whether it was the husband you are bound to
Or whether the lover whom this night you took.
Alcmene: Lover or husband! What language is this?
Am I not solely through this sacred tie
Entitled to receive you? How can a law,
A worldly law, torment you which,
Far from in any way constraining us,
For all aroused desires, however bold,
Joyously rather tears down all constraints?

Jupiter: What I, dearest Alcmene, feel for you
Exceeds, do you see? by the distances of suns,
What any husband owes you. Wean yourself,
Beloved, off your legal spouse
And make a difference between me and him,
It pains me, this demeaning mixing up,
And it is more than I can bear to think
That all you took was the mere nincompoop
Who coldly thinks he has a right to you.
My wish, sweet radiance, is to have appeared
To you peculiarly in my own being,
Your conqueror because to conquer you
The art was taught me by the almighty gods.
Why let the Theban's vain commander
Meddle in here who for a noble house
Latterly wooed a wealthy prince's daughter?
What do you say? My wish is, do you see?
To leave that public clown your virtue and
For me, for me myself, reserve your love.
Alcmene: Amphitryon, you jest. If the people here
Heard you thus heaping insults on Amphitryon
They would be bound to think you someone else,
I don't know who. Not that I have not learned
In this past joyous night how it may be
Often the lover who outdoes the husband,
But since one and the other by the gods
Were joined in you for me with all my heart
If one did fail me I forgive the other.
Jupiter: Promise me then the joyous celebration
Enjoyed in honour of our blithe reunion
You never will let lapse from your memory
And this day, like a day in heaven, dearest,
You will keep separate from all the poor
Day in day out continuance of your marriage,
Promise, I say, that you will think of me
Still in that future when Amphitryon returns
Alcmene: Why yes. What can I say to that?
Jupiter: I thank you.
It has more rhyme and reason than you think.
Farewell now. Duty calls.
Alcmene: And must you go.
And not end this brief night, that on
Ten thousand wings has flown, with me, beloved?
Jupiter: Did this night seem more brief than other nights?
Alcmene: Oh.
Jupiter: Sweet child, for our happiness
Aurora could not do more than she did.
Farewell. I'll see the others

Do not last longer than earth needs them to.
Alcmene: He's tipsy with it, I think. And I am too.

Banville (2000:19-22)

Jupiter: My darling girl, how beautiful you are.
And how your words fall heavy on my heart!
Yes, I must go, there's no avoiding it,
But ere I go, there's something I must say.
I know that by the marriage vows you swore,
You are compelled to love me -
Minna: What!
Compelled?
Jupiter:I mean you have a duty to love me,
A duty under law, so that I could,
If I were minded to, go to a judge
And make you grant me my conjugal rights.
Minna: What an extraordinary thing to say!
Conjugal rights? My duty under law?
Jupiter: But yet it's true, and this is what irks me.
Call it mere foolishness, but there you are.
Think how much better it would be, my dear,
If laws and marriage vows were set at nought
And you should freely offer me your love
Without formality.
Minna: Formality?
Jupiter: Come, speak from out your secret heart and say
Whether it was your husband that last night
Brought you such joy, or if it was instead
The lover, whom the husband's form conceals?
Minna: Dear heart, I must confess you're baffling me.
Husband and lover, they are both the same,
United in your sole belovèd form.
And as for laws, do they not rather spur
Us on to bolder feats of love, deeper
Depths of uncontrolled desire?
Is passion's pleasure not pricked up by rules?
Mercury: (*Aside, pretending shock*) Well, madam!
Jupiter: Dear, the love I feel for you
Is greater than what any husband could-
Minna: But are you not my husband?
Jupiter: Yes, of course!
But when I hear you say the very word,
It makes me think of lawyers and of priests,
All that formality that rings us round.
It makes it seem that last night in your bed
The one whom you held in your loving arms

Was just that ordinary mortal man
Who led you to the altar, and who thinks
He has a legal right to all your charms.
What is he, but a soldier, yes, a lout-
Minna: A lout?
Jupiter:When he's mere husband to you, yes.
Minna: To me, my darling, you are never mere.
Jupiter: Last night - you said yourself - it was divine.
Minna: And so it was.
Mercury: (*Aside*) I'll bet it was.
Jupiter: My dear,
I wanted to appear in my own being,
Not in the guise of husband; do you see?
Mercury: (*Aside*) Oh, here we go: love me, love my godhead.
Jupiter: In me are things only a god can know.
There is a loneliness, a solitude,
No mortal could endure.
Minna: Oh, love-
Jupiter: No, please,
Just listen. When I came to you last night,
As usual the others laughed and said
Behind their hands, 'Oh, there he goes again,
Insatiable old goat -'
Minna: The others-?
Goat-?
Jupiter: I mean the other - officers, of course;
You know how soldiers talk.
Minna: I certainly
Do not!
Jupiter: But what they cannot understand
Is this deep emptiness with my heart
That I must seek to fill, with human love.
I'm growing old-
Minna: You're not yet thirty-five.
Jupiter: I mean my heart is old. I'm grey inside;
The weariness of being who I am,
You cannot know.
Minna: I'm younger than you, yes,
But not by all that much! A mere ten years.
Jupiter: Please promise me, my love, that this long night
That we have spent together will not fade;
That you will keep the memory of it
As fresh within your breast as if it were
A night you spent in Heaven -
Minna: Yes, of course.
Jupiter: And that this day that's starting now will be
A day out of your days, a golden day,
The light of which will burn throughout your life.

Minna: What can I say?
Jupiter: Say that you promise.
Minna: Yes,
I promise.
Mercury: (*Aside; sarcastic*) Ahh-
Jupiter: And when Ashburningham
Returns, still you will think of me as me,
And not as him. You'll promise that, as well?
Minna: When you return, who will you be but you?
What other you is there that I might love?
I wish, my dear, you'd stop these riddles now.
Jupiter: I will; I'll go; you've promised. Duty calls.
Minna: Oh, how I hate for this brief time to end.
Jupiter: Did last night seem more brief than other nights?
Minna: Oh no, I meant -
Jupiter: The dawn could do no more
Than wait upon our happiness this long.
Day must begin, and men must have their light -
Farewell,
He becomes invisible.
Minna: He's drunk on love, and so am I.

Exit, with Kitty following; when they are gone, all of Jupiter's energy drains
*   from him, and he sinks down on a grassy mount, exhausted, and falls into*
*   a doze.*

Mercury: He's not the god he was, and that's the truth.
The fighting gets him going, fires his blood. […]

The Infinities (2009:75-9)

Consider the scene.

Their passion all used up at last, they lie in bed together naked, Dad and his girl,
reclining on a strew of pillows in the morning's plum-blue twilight. Or, rather,
Dad reclines, leaning on an elbow and cradling the girl's gold head and
burnished shoulders in his lap. Her left arm is raised behind her and draped with
negligent ease about his mighty neck. He gazes before him, seeing nothing. In
his ancient eyes there is that look, of weariness, dashed hope, tormented
melancholy, which I have seen in them so often - too often - at moments such as
this. He is rehearsing in his head the age-old inquisition. When he speaks she
hears not his but her husband's voice and feels her husband's familiar breath
waft over her breasts, a lapsing zephyr. Familiar but, it must mundanely be said,
unfamiliarly sweet, for this early, sleep-encrusted hour. For, oh dear, they do
tend to pong in the mornings.

'Can people who are married be in love?' He asks, in young Adam's very voice. 'I mean, can they still care as deeply, as desperately, for each other as they did when they were lovers?'

Always at the start like this his heart races, as he thinks, Perhaps, this time-?

'Mmm,' she says, and squirms, snuggling closer against him, making the tangle of old dry hair at his lap crackle under her like a nest of thorns. 'You ask such things, and at such times.'
His arm is across her belly, his great, rough hand caresses her warm thigh.

'You know,' he says, 'it is not your husband who is here now.'

She smiles. He sees upside down her mouth, with lips pressed shut, flex like a myrmidon's small-bow being drawn; her eyes are lightly closed under fluttering lids.

'Who, then?' she asks.

He waits a weighty moment.

'Why, your lover, of course.'

'Oh, yes,' she says, with a contented, feathery sigh, squirming closer still, 'him, too.'

Such far silence, not a sound, in this suspended world. She opens her eyes and vainly seeks for focus in the depthless shadows above her. A blissful ease suffuses her veins. She thinks of the baby she lost last year, not with the all too familiar breath-catching stab of woe, but calmly, remotely, even; it is like looking back across a plain and seeing only a smudge of dust where a moment before had been fire and ruin and loud lamentation. The baby died inside her after some weeks of a sort of life. Not a baby at all, then, really. She pictures it as a little soft limpet clinging to the wall of the womb, blind and bewildered, washed at by amniotic tides, assailed by the muffled sounds of her innards at work, a frail failing impossible thing.

'But which would you rather,' he persists, and she feels his fingers tensing on her thigh, 'the lover, or the husband?'

She might be exasperated but instead is amused. She is accustomed to her husband's finicking ways, his insistence on tracing all lines of enquiry to their logical end, as if things had an end, as if they were logical. He wants to be his father, reducing life to a set of sums. But Adam is softer than his father, and younger than the old man ever could have been, and love, not logic, is his weakness. What need has she of a baby when she has him? This is one of her secretest thoughts, one of the ones she must never utter.

'Husband or lover,' she says, 'what is the difference - a ring?'

'A vow.' She puts back her head quickly to squinny up at him. His voice had sounded so strange, so deep and strange, as if it were he, now, who was making a solemn pledge. 'Don't you see,' he goes on in that same thickened tone, in earnest haste, '-what I feel for you exceeds infinitely what a mere husband could ever be capable of feeling? Didn't you sense that, here, with me? Have you ever been loved like this before?'

'Oh,' she says, laughing, 'it was divine, surely!" She is looking up lazily again into the somehow luminous dark. She feels him nodding.

'Yes,' he says. 'And you won't forget this night, will you? When the sun rises and your husband returns you'll remember me - won't you?'

'But you'll be him!'

'I shall be in him, yes, but he will not be me.'

'Well, whichever. You're making my head swim.' With the arm that is about his neck she pulls his head forward and kisses him on the mouth the wrong side up. 'Oh,' she says with a little shiver, 'you feel like you have a beard.'

'Promise,' he whispers, his face suspended featureless above hers, 'promise you'll remember me.'

She grasps his head by the ears as if it were a jug and tries to waggle it. 'How could I forget you, you dope?'

When she releases him he leans back on the pillows and she sees that the window behind its thin curtain is engraved, and there is a gleam on a curtain rail, and the outline of Adam's football poster appears on the wall, and when she looks along herself she can see her toes. It is all too quick, too much. Her eyelids droop 'Promise!' - the whisper comes again but as if from far off now. She tries to say yes, tries to give her pledge, though to what, exactly, she does not know, but sighs instead and draws up the sheet to cover herself and turns on her side and sleeps.

He too is sleeping now, my foolish father, having ranted his fill on the fickleness of girls - he, *he* complains of fickleness! - and their interfering husbands, the poor boobies, who do not even know themselves cuckolded.

I have chosen in this section of analysis to include a passage from Banville's 2009

novel *The Infinities*, which is an adaptation of *Amphitryon*. This is one of the occasions

where Banville's novel makes most direct reference to the source text.

Constantine adds an asterisk-marked endnote for the 'lover or husband' comment: 'The distinction is made by Molière's Jupiter too, but Kleist develops it. Note particularly the sexual uninhibitedness of Alcmene's reply' (432). While Constantine does provide a preliminary introduction to each of the source texts, he rarely adds endnotes within the target texts themselves solely to comment on the plot or language; while endnotes are frequent in his *Selected Writings*, they typically explain references with which the modern reader may not be familiar: for example, the significance of a classical location. It is noteworthy that Constantine is attracting his reader's attention to the importance of this conversation, and of Alcmene's reply. A notable occurrence of 'language' is used at this very moment ('Lover or husband! What language is this?' for 'Geliebter und Gemahl! Was sprichst du da?'). The dialogue of this scene centres on the power language has to shape our experience. Constantine chooses 'more rhyme and reason' to translate 'Sinn und Bedeutung. This choice associates rhyme - metre - with reason, further developing the strong connection between language and human understanding or perception of the world. That the two words are inextricably connected in this idiom is an indication that part of the process of making rational sense is the making of poetic or linguistic sense. This is a theme that will be analysed in detail with regard to Kleist's 'Die Marquise von O' and Constantine's short story 'Words to Say It' in Chapter 5. Conversely, however, I would also argue that in this case use of a popular saying - 'rhyme or reason' - might inhibit the English reader from thinking about what the terms themselves mean, since the sense will be understood as a unit, and perhaps even glossed over as somewhat of a cliché. This may also be the case for other uses of slang or idiom in the target text: 'duty calls' for 'mich ruft die Pflicht', and 'tipsy' for 'berauscht'.

The idiom 'neither rhyme nor reason' was popularised by Shakespeare, who

first used it in his *Comedy of Errors*:

> Dromio: But I pray, sir, why am I beaten?
> Antipholus: Dost thou not know?
> Dromio: Nothing, sir, but that I am beaten.
> Antipholus: Shall I tell you why?
> Dromio: Ay, sir, and wherefore; for they say, every why hath a
> wherefore.
> Antipholus: Why, first, for flouting me, and then wherefore, for
> urging it the second time to me.
> Dromio: Was there ever any man thus beaten out of season,
> When in the why and the wherefore is neither rhyme nor reason?

The scenario in which this exchange takes place bears striking similarities to Kleist's

Amphitryon - not to this particular scene, but to the opening scene which was discussed

above. In both cases, a master - or a god - beats his servant - or a mortal - due to

confusion based on a case of mistaken identity, the result of twins or doubles.

Further Shakespearean resonances for English-speaking audiences emerge in

Constantine's 'And must you go./And not end this brief night, that on/Ten thousand

wings has flown, with me, beloved?' Consider, from *Romeo and Juliet*:

> Juliet: Come, night. Come, Romeo. Come, thou day in night,
> For thou wilt lie upon the wings of night
> Whiter than new snow upon a raven's back.

and, in the famous morning scene where, after the consummation of the couple's

marriage, Juliet asks Romeo:

> Wilt thou be gone? It is not yet near day.

Less widely known, perhaps, but also relevant, is the following quote from *Troilus and

Cressida*, in which the title characters find themselves in a similar situation:

> Cressida: Night hath been too brief.

Across all of the above cases the female lover takes a similar stance and uses similar language. This is a trope with which an English-speaking reader might justifiably be assumed to be familiar. These connotations are also arguably present in Kleist's text: Kleist's writing is, after all, heavily indebted to Shakespeare. Nevertheless, the fact that Shakespeare's source texts and Constantine's target text are in the same language - English - serves to emphasise the connection.

Without wishing the belabour the point throughout the chapters of this thesis, I will highlight here another example of Constantine's reflection of Kleist's intricate syntax:

> Your conqueror because to conquer you
> The art was taught me by the almighty gods.

Here Constantine takes the cue from Kleist's chiasmus: 'Besieger dein, weil über dich zu siegen [...]'. Uses of this structure, as discussed in my analysis of Banville's target text of *Der zerbrochne Krug* in the previous chapter, reinforce the impression of mirroring and doubling that is the basis of the source text.

The most striking thing about Banville's version of this scene in *God's Gift* is the inserted dialogue in which Jupiter lays out the 'emptiness' of being a god and the pathos of his desperation to fill his heart with human love. The space explicitly given to this idea is also expanded and a major part of *The Infinities*. Whether or not the audience actually feels pathos on behalf of Jupiter is debatable; even so, this focus arguably makes this scene less about Minna and more about Jupiter's experience of the encounter, especially because Mercury is providing asides that skew the audience towards the gods' viewpoints, and because these asides draw attention to Jupiter's predicament and its longstanding nature ('Oh, here we go: love me, love my godhead'). While Constantine's introductory note to his target text focuses on Alcmene's plight, I

would argue that Banville has more interest in Ashburningham and Jupiter. Friberg-Harnesk states that in Banville's version 'it is Minna's perplexity [...] that hold[s] the attention' (2018:100-1) - I would argue that this scene provides evidence to contradict that interpretation. Furthermore, the reference to Jupiter as an 'old goat' links the god to a wealth of other goat-like figures that populate the texts of Kleist, Banville and Constantine. Examples include Benny Grace in *The Infinities*, Judge Adam in *Der zerbrochne Krug*, and the characters of Constantine's short story 'Goat'. The latter text is infused with imagery regarding the devil, hell, goats, Pan, pan-pipes, and ice. Ice is associated throughout Constantine's oeuvre with hell, subverting the typical association of hell with fire, and perhaps as a response to Dante's image of the icebound Satan in the *Inferno*. Throughout the oeuvres of the three writers, goats are linked to the devil, or a character with devilish qualities, and this same resonance can be felt with regard to Banville's Jupiter.

Banville follows the scene between Alcmene and Jupiter by inserting a speech by Mercury - not present in the source text - that further expounds the idea of Jupiter as tired and desiring to be human, with humorous, arch references to other historical events (e.g. that the eruption of Vesuvius was the result of Jupiter's amorous adventures). Mercury's aside (a sarcastic 'Ahh') at the significant moment of Minna's promise foreshadows (even mocks) the final line of the play: Minna's 'Ah' (Alcmene's 'Ach'), which has long fascinated Kleist critics due to its ambiguity. Again, the text explicitly reminds the reader of its own artificiality. Consider the fact that Banville's Jupiter 'becomes invisible': how is this to be achieved by a production? This reminds the audience that the gods are not only characters within the play but also a device. Given that Banville himself, when speaking about *Amphitryon*, typically (exclusively)

focuses on the character of Amphitryon and the gods' experiences, and does not lean towards seeing Alcmene as the focus, this potential move away from Minna is not surprising.

Minna interjects (sometimes stopping Jupiter mid-sentence, and on one occasion being asked to 'just listen' by Jupiter) more frequently in this target text than in the source text. This both makes the dialogue more conversational, and perhaps gives the impression of Minna having a more active voice, although it should not be implied that Kleist's/Constantine's Alcmene is not forthright in her answers. Additionally, I would argue that, when subjected to closer scrutiny, Banville's Minna actually seems to have less to say than Kleist's: most of her speech comprises short bursts of surprise or agreement.

Minna's 'Is passion's pleasure not pricked up by rules?' is a humorous question due to the innuendo and the alliteration that make this a very marked sentence, which Mercury then highlights. Banville, like Constantine, does not shy away from Minna's sexual uninhibitedness. Kleist's Alcmene is herself certainly not prudish, but her speech in this scene *is* a serious one concerning how marriage makes her passion legitimate. The seriousness of the discussion at hand may, when compared to the source text, be somewhat undermined by the innuendo in Banville's version.

On the other hand Minna's outrage at Jupiter's suggestion that she 'know[s] how soldiers talk' would suggest a certain prudishness or innocence - feigned or otherwise - and the innuendo could be read as intentional or unintentional on the character's part. Considering the text not only as something to be read, but also as something to be staged, each performance might make these lines read differently via tone or body

language, with it being up to the individual director or actor to make his or her own decision.

Analysis of Banville's version of this scene in comparison with Kleist's source text provides insight into the questions Banville's change in setting raises. Murphy, in his discussion of this feature of the text, argues that it does not produce much effect, since 'retention of Mercury and Jupiter inevitably universalizes the context' (2018:146). I would agree that *God's Gift* has much to say that can be applied to the universal human condition. On the other hand, it is interesting to consider that in *God's Gift*, Jupiter's suggestion, that marriage vows are set at nought, is being said in a Christian, not a classical, context (or rather a Christian *and* classical context, since the classical gods are present). That Jupiter asks Minna to remember the night of love-making they have shared as a 'night you spent in Heaven' is somewhat remarkable given the 1798, Irish setting: the Christian Heaven is not usually associated with Eros. Furthermore, later in the text Minna will naturally laugh off the idea that her lover might in fact be the god Jupiter, since classical gods are not typically known to roam eighteenth-century Ireland. This makes the final reveal - that her lover is indeed Jupiter, and that she is pregnant with his child - all the more shocking.

There are many further questions to be asked about the Irish setting of this adaptation, from the pragmatic to the theoretical. What accents do the actors playing the gods speak in? In a society that has long rejected the imposition of English rule over the Irish, what does it mean to accept the universal rule of the gods over the earth? I will investigate the concept of colonialism and authority within Banville's *God's Gift* in the next chapter.

The extract from *The Infinities* follows, to a certain extent, the same basic structure as the scene in *God's Gift*, in that Hermes frames the action as an example of Zeus searching for love once again. This is followed by a direct address from Hermes on the exhausted state of Zeus. Even more so than in *God's Gift*, here the god is suffering, making an appeal, and in this target text, Helen (Alcmene) is in a self-absorbed, even powerful position: laughing, calling the god a 'dope', and distractedly falling asleep. While here, as in *God's Gift*, Banville's focus is on the nature and experience of being a god, much of this passage is narrated via Helen's thoughts, giving her increased agency. She does not promise to remember Zeus - since she falls asleep - although she does intend to do so. This gap between intention and result adds complexity and further ambiguity to Banville's text.

Banville quotes snippets from the corresponding *God's Gift* scene earlier in the novel (although later in terms of in-text chronology) when Helen is alone, on the toilet and thinking about the encounter, and when she returns to the bedroom to talk to young Adam there. The fact that these words come into Helen's head, but clearly as a quotation, has an effect whereby Minna's feelings are both close and distant to her. She is not Minna, and yet she, consciously or unconsciously identifies with her; she is playing Minna/Alcmene in a play. The toilet scene is also noteworthy as the scene that Banville, in the 2010 interview quoted above, identifies as a moment of vulgarity in his writing. It coincides with one of the most self-referential and potentially complex moments of the novel.

The idea of classical gods in a modern setting is less ridiculous in *The Infinities* perhaps, even though the same conditions apply regarding the setting (i.e. that it is not a classical setting). This is due to the fact it is a novel, not a play, meaning that we do not

physically see actors become "invisible" . The novel mainly takes place within the abstracted realm of thought. Nevertheless, Banville (or Hermes as narrator) does explicitly present this extract, which is one of the few passages in the novel that corresponds fairly directly to the play, as a scene, an aesthetic object: 'Consider the scene'. This links the passage more strongly to Kleist's source text and *God's Gift*. At other places in the novel (and throughout Banville's oeuvre) passages are described as 'tableaux'. Dramatic irony is present here too: regarding the sexual encounter, Helen says 'It was divine, surely!' As discussed in the literature review of this thesis, Murphy determines these aspects of the novel to be the result of a deliberate attempt to generate self-consciousness within the text.

4. KLEIST AND BANVILLE'S WIDER OEUVRE

In this chapter I incorporate Banville's wider oeuvre into my analysis. To begin, much discussion can be had regarding Banville's *God's Gift* and *The Infinities* that is better placed outside of a direct, text-by-text comparison with Constantine's target texts. These are the subject of the first section of analysis, which investigates the role of twins, and parallel universes, within Banville's Kleistian texts, and further explores the implications of the change in setting from Thebes to Ireland in *God's Gift*. The following section will provide a reading of Banville's *Love in the Wars*, a play based on Kleist's *Penthesilea*. This target text is a fruitful place to analyse Banville's conceptions of men and women within his works, as well as the role of metaphor. Finally, I will turn to *The Broken Jug* with relation to *The Book of Evidence* and *Snow*, to analyse the role of the criminal and corrupt states in Banville's writing.

Twins and parallel universes: *Amphitryon* and *The Infinities*

In our interview, Banville's response to my questioning of his changing of the setting was that there was something inherently funny in the notion of comic events happening in a tragic political context, and that the Irish audience would see the joke in an Irish author portraying morally ambiguous Irish characters, but that he was not making political points: 'I just wanted them for the comedy' (appendix A). I would agree with Banville that his target texts do not necessarily use the Irish setting to make particular political points. However, I do not think that the Irish political context only generates comedy. In addition to similar statements already discussed in this thesis, Murphy argues, regarding *God's Gift*, that since Mercury makes a reference to 1954 from a character supposedly situated in 1798 (which he labels as 'typically Banvillean

anachronistic play' (2018:146)) the specific time period of the setting is unimportant. It 'rarely extends beyond a backdrop' (ibid.), Murphy says.

Part of the reason that Banville loves Kleist is for the vulgar quality of the latter's writing. It does make sense that therefore he would appeal to the people most likely to be seeing the play in Dublin - an Irish audience - and write in the language of his country. This may appear to be self-evident: why wouldn't Banville write in Hiberno-English, since that is his language? But this *is* a choice: consider Constantine's stance on producing translated text that is strange and, crucially, not 'the language of the streets' (appendix B). Banville's characters interact in a way familiar to the Irish audience, including use of Hiberno-English dialect (e..g from *God's Gift* 'Begob' 'boreen' (29), 'Jaze' (38) 'rí-rá' (51), 'stirabout and soda bread' (59); from *The Broken Jug* 'riz' (33), 'spalpeen' (35), 'da' (49)) and references to figures and events from Irish tradition. Even in *Love in the Wars,* explicitly set in classical Troy, the language, especially that used between the Greek soldiers, whilst not necessarily specifically Hiberno-English, is relatively modern-day (a few examples: 'What's up?' (14); 'to deal the finisher' (15); 'sour puss' (67); 'fair and square' (68)).

Whilst the above is not evidence of the target texts being political, it does contribute to establishing the setting as a local, Irish one and the texts as a product of a more recent, Irish setting. Added to this are the specifically political settings of *The Broken Jug* and *God's Gift*, which complicate the power dynamics between the characters, and thus the level of the audience's sympathy towards them (in a way that today's audiences are likely to understand at least at a basic level).

Consider, for example, the ways in which several characters have roles, whether due to their heritage, their personal relationships or their professional roles, that result

in split allegiances or identities. Souse, who is confronted with Mercury but in his own

form, already has a split identity insofar as he is an Irishman, who is working for the

English (although the reader gets the impression that he is mainly operating on his own

behalf). Souse's first reaction to the presence of Mercury is that he hopes the as-yet

unidentified figure 'is not a rebel […] It's said they save the worst deaths for their own'

(12). Souse's immediate fear is being confronted with one of his own countrymen, who

might usually be assumed to be an ally; ironically he is confronted with a figure both

even more familiar and yet vastly stranger to him: "himself". Nevertheless, Souse is

accustomed to having a destabilised identity, and, aptly, his reaction to being

confronted with his double is less full of existential crisis (and more humorous), than

that of Ashburningham, who has, until now, been sure of his own identity.

    A key scene occurs at the play's climax, in both the source text and the target

text, when the general Amphitryon or Ashburningham appeals to the citizens to support

him in his claim of being the real general and not the impostor. In the source text,

Kleist's Amphitryon says:

> Amphitryon: […] Er wars,
> Der lügnerische Höllengeist, der mich
> Aus Theben will, aus meiner Frauen Herzen,
> Aus dem Gedächtnis mich der Welt, ja könnt ers,
> Aus des Bewußtseins eigner Feste drängen.
> […]
> […] kehrt den ganzen vollen Strahl auf mich,
> Von Kopf zu Fuß ihn auf und nieder führend,
> Und sagt mir an, und sprecht, und steht mir Rede:
> Wer bin ich?
> Das Volk: Wer du bist? Amphitryon!
> Amphitryon: Wohlan. Amphitryon (2013:312)

In the target text the general's speech becomes:

Ashburningham: That creature you see standing at my gate
Is some foul spirit sent up out of Hell
To take from me the things that were once mine.
He wants to drive me out of hearth and home,
Out of my wife's affections, and the world's
Remembrance - yes, and even out of my
Own consciousness! Don't let him do it! Please!
Just look at me, and tell them who I am. You know me; I'm that same Ashburningham
Who saved your houses and your fields from ruin,
Who met that rebel scum on Vinegar Hill
And taught them to respect our good King's rule.
Come, now, I beg you, say it: Who am I?

Pause.

Jupiter: I think their silence speaks their choice for them. (2000:66)

Whether or not we feel sympathy here for Ashburningham, whether we still see him as the 'heroic' 'tragic' figure that Banville considers at least Amphitryon to be, is debatable. Banville's general is more obviously pleading than Kleist's: the inclusion of 'Don't let him do it! Please!'; the omission of 'if he could' ('ja könnt ers') and the related implication that Jupiter has already succeeding in taking from him the 'things that were once mine' gives Ashburningham's words a heightened air of desperate pleading. It is hard not to sympathise with someone who has been so thoroughly and existentially displaced as the general, who does not know, cannot know, how or why this has happened, or even that it has really happened. At the same time, his disparaging words to the Irish citizens about the Irish rebels and clear sense of English superiority over the locals are hardly likely to endear him to his listeners, and some might even feel a certain sense of righteous retribution in the sight of the Englishman, so assured in his simplistic interpretation of the Irish, now unable to trust his own senses. In this regard, this speech becomes even more striking when we look at the stage directions that

accompany it, which have no basis in the ST. Banville's general is actually addressing the theatre audience itself here, who perform the role of the citizens. This is presumably largely an Irish audience, an Irish audience being directly addressed in the second person. When, unlike in the ST, the recipients of the general's speech fail to answer in the affirmative, as indicated by the TT's pause, Ashburningham admonishes them: '(To audience) You ungrateful herd of Irish swine!'. The text therefore deliberately relies on its own interaction with the audience that is seeing it, with the Irish setting imposed by Banville introducing new elements of complication in audience members' reaction to these characters and their political situation.

The political setting of the target text also has implications regarding Banville's interest in identity, and being displaced by the Other. As will be shown, the fact that Banville both engages with *Amphitryon* and adapts it to a highly politicised context adds a perspective regarding the typically Banvillean preoccupation of identity that is otherwise not prominent in his work. It is ironic that the self-assured English general Ashburningham who makes sweeping statements about Irish identity is displaced in terms of his identity. Consider Bhabha's Postcolonial theory in this context:

> Identity for Bhabha constantly moves between positions, displacing others and being displaced in turn. […] The colonizer can construct his identity only through the stereotype of the Other. […] The stereotypes thus help the formation of the colonizer's identity while simultaneously rendering it unstable and dependent. (Nayar 2008:27)

Here Ashburningham himself is being colonised or suppressed by the god; having his home and identity taken from him. Some in a predominantly Irish audience might feel a certain sense of righteous retribution in the sight of the Englishman, previously in a position of power and so assured in his simplistic interpretation of the Irish, now unable

to trust his own senses. The classical gods as "living" figures, powerful above mortals and yet able to engage directly with the mortal world and with human-like emotions and motivations, are effective means by which to engage with themes of power and identity. (Note that other Irish writers such as Heaney have used the classical past to engage with the Irish present, and Kleist's *Amphitryon* has been linked with *Prometheus* (see Wittowski 1971 on 'religious authority' vs 'ethical autonomy').) Friberg-Harnesk observes that within the feudal system of caste and rank, signs necessarily have fixed meanings that should not be up for debate (2018:112-113). I propose that Ashburningham, before the events of the play, mistakenly believes his status not only as an individual, but as a General, and a colonising British General, is stable. In order to wield power over others, perhaps, one must believe that one's soul is designed for a high rank. Souse, whose identity is already more fluid at the start of the play, and who, as a servant, has less to lose in the deconstruction of rank, adapts more easily to the knowledge that his double is afoot.

Thus matters of identity, with which Banville is typically so preoccupied and which one might argue are universal, non-specific, epistemological, apolitical, are intrinsically and inescapably bound up with the political situation. The Irish audience's position with regards to the other (the English), and national identity, are also drawn into question here not only by the questions of audience sympathy that arise but by the audience members' forced adoption of the roles of the Irish citizens and their forced (lack of) response to Ashburningham's plea.

The ambiguity of Kleist's writing allows Banville to introduce these further complications of audience sympathy for the characters, and allows for the iconoclasm Banville mentioned when discussing his attraction to *The Broken Jug*.

Beside the question of degree of sympathy with the English and Irish characters, we also have the existence of the classical gods in a place and time where they should not be. Just like the mortal characters who are confronted with their doubles, the audience is in the position of seeing something on stage it accepts to be true, yet knows cannot be true. Within Kleist's play the audience would accept the classical gods as existing within a classical context, even if they are an anachronism in Kleist's time; within Banville's play the gods are quite obviously out of place, but this is not interrogated. This is actually very in keeping with Kleist's work, in which unexpected, unexplained things happen. Banville's change of setting extends that foregrounding of the unexplainable. References to a Christian god, and the highlighting of the play's artificiality and the prevalent dramatic irony delivered by Mercury and Souse, make it clear that this is not a play that tries to hide its discrepancies but rather one that highlights them, without any direct explanation. Compared to the source text, Banville heavily increases the extent to which the gods speak to the audience or comment on their own situation. In the case of Mercury these comments frequently take the form of Shakespearean asides from a perspective that is both within and outside of the main action, and suggests that the author himself is commenting. The play is aware of its own absurdity and in this way the play itself, and the author himself, speaks directly to the audience and relies on the audience's awareness of, and reaction to, that absurdity. The theme of being forcibly made unsure of what we think we know, of challenging the established and accepted narrative, is therefore present not only in the plot of the play, and in the question of whether the audience sympathises or identifies with the English and/or Irish characters, but also on the level of author-audience interaction.

What is clear, then, is that a significant part of the effect of Banville's change in setting is dependent on his audience, that is, an Irish audience, or at least an audience with some knowledge of Irish political history. Much of the intended effect only happens once an audience is seeing it, or reading it. I would propose here that the change in and specification of the setting provokes reactions from an audience with some degree of specific knowledge. The changed setting therefore functions as a shortcut, allowing Banville's audience a way into the complex questions evoked in the source text, and at the same time adds a further degree of complexity by introducing the idea of challenging standard interpretations into the realm of Irish political history. Banville is not providing any answers here, not, as he himself said, making any specific political points. He is problematising in a general sense, using constraints (the constraints of adaptation and a specific setting) to do so.

This ultimately makes sense within Banville's wider oeuvre. It is not as if it could be argued all of Banville's works have no specific setting. His semi-biographical, semi-fictional narratives of famous intellectuals and scientists have very specific settings: the lives of particular historical figures, albeit usually those of a scientist or philosopher whose life is in the service of the pursuit of knowledge. Within these contextual constraints Banville finds the material to address his favoured questions, indeed to bring them to light by means of, rather than in spite of, the particulars of the story. Here I place McMinn's statement, quoted earlier, that Banville's work is 'decisively fictional, non-realistic' within that statement's context:

> even such a decisively fictional, non-realistic body of work such as this moves towards, rather than away from, the objective world for its fictional strength. Banville's "supreme fictions" contest, rather than evade, history, looking at the ways in which they reflect upon each other, and how this mutual reflection confuses any old certainties about the secure and knowable differences between the real and the illusory.

In this way Banville's Kleist adaptations do sit within his wider oeuvre, even if the target texts push into "real world" political concerns further than he has pushed before.

Attention will turn now to *The Infinities*. *The Infinities* is based on the plot and themes of *Amphitryon*, but is entirely different in its manifestation. Old Adam Godley, a brilliant scientist who has discovered a theory of parallel universes, is in a coma, dying, and wishes to sleep with his daughter-in-law, Helen, who has come to stay at the family home with her husband, young Adam.

With Banville moving the story's setting from the source text's antiquity to 1798 Ireland in *God's Gift*, and then again to what appears to be modern-day Ireland in *The Infinities*, the role of the gods in each text is distinctly different. In the source text the appearance of a god among mortals might be an unusual occurrence, but it is a common feature of classical literature and the audience is therefore likely to accept it. In *God's Gift*, set in 1798, the first mention in Act Two, Scene Three that perhaps the unknown lover was a Roman god immediately causes Minna (the Alcmene of *Amphitryon*) to state explicitly that her husband must be playing a trick on her, so preposterous is the suggestion. Banville emphasises this point with stage directions throughout the rest of the scene, with Minna speaking 'ironically' (56) and 'still playing the game' (55) not only during Jupiter's suggestions that she has slept with a god, but also in the discussion of her supposed routine worship of that god. Throughout the target text the characters appeal to a singular 'God', presumably the Christian God, in times of distress. It is clear that none of them believe in the Roman gods, and they would, indeed, find the very idea ridiculous. It is only at the end of the play, when Jupiter reveals his identity, that the existence of the gods is established. In *The Infinities* Banville takes this one step further: there is no "big reveal" at the end of the novel, and

none of the characters (with the exception of Old Adam, as will be discussed below) have any notion of having interacted with any divinity. Textual evidence strongly suggests, in fact, that the gods do not exist outside of old Adam's fantasy, an interpretation favoured by Banville himself: 'The gods, of course, are Adam Godley's mind. They don't have any physical reality, they don't have any reality at all outside Adam Godley. I mean, the whole thing is got up by him, I think. It's all happening in his head' (2010).

Where does this leave the idea of a god in each text? Why adapt Kleist's play, the central conceit of which is the presence of the gods of antiquity, if neither the play's characters, nor the play's audience, will believe in them?

As Joseph McMinn has noted, much of Banville's writing aims to conceptualise thought and 'imaginative knowledge' (1999:ix). His protagonists typically use analogies to describe thinking. In the series of *Doctor Copernicus*, *Kepler* and *The Newton Letter*, Banville writes semi-fictional accounts of historical scientists' lives to explore science as a way to conceptualise the human brain and its understanding of, and place within, the universe. McMinn analyses how in the Freddie Montgomery series, consisting of *The Book of Evidence*, *Ghosts* and *Athena*, Banville uses visual art as a means by which to explore the same ideas. Art in Banville, according to McMinn, does not express with words and therefore is not hampered by the inadequacy of language; it is self-absorbed, solipsistic; 'the narrative is endlessly reflecting upon itself' (1999:127). Banville also frequently does this by use of nature imagery, typically seascapes: imagined or real seas, shores and sands become abstract landscapes that are a metaphor for the mind.

In the case of *The Infinities*, it is the gods who are the prominent device by which Banville depicts old Adam's mind, and his lifelong attempts to establish, or entirely disprove, some kind of order in the world. Old Adam is a typical Banville protagonist in that he is solipsistic. He finds it difficult to believe in the existence of other people as separate entities or in their existence at all when they are not in his presence. Old Adam, who is used to being the one man who knows "everything", who sees the infinity of universes as it is, is forced to lack knowledge through the existence of other people with their own will. It is, therefore, perhaps unsurprising that in a coma, with nothing to do but think, and with no actual way of finding out what anybody outside of his immediate vicinity is doing, the solipsistic and somewhat superior old Adam would invent the gods as versions of himself, both in that they possess full consciousness of all things and beings, and are not trapped by the inadequacies of language; and, paradoxically, as a way to interact with the outside world, as omnipresent beings who are a part of everything and who can do what old Adam wants to do and cannot: namely, stop being 'pure mind' (2010:32) and enjoy the sensual pleasures in life: in this instance, sleeping with Helen. And yet, they are only figments of his mind, and should not physically be able to fulfil his goal. In both *God's Gift* and *The Infinities*, Banville stresses the pathos inherent in being a divinity, whether that is Jupiter himself, who, in *God's Gift*, desperate and exhausted by his desire to have Minna love him, sadly contrasts the warmth of mortal life with 'our cold, lifeless Heaven' (2000:72), or old Adam, whose godlike conception of the theory of infinities and experience of being pure mind, in the coma, leaves him entirely exhausted. In *The Infinities*, Hermes states: 'The inability of mortals to imagine things as they truly are is what allows them to live, since one momentary, unresisted glimpse of the world's

totality of suffering would annihilate them on the spot, like a whiff of the most lethal sewer gas. We have stronger stomachs, stouter lungs, we see it all in all its awfulness at every moment and are not daunted; that is the difference; that is what makes us divine' (2010:37-8). Full consciousness is not for humans, and old Adam's attempts to access it, to be the centre of the universe, fail; meanwhile, Banville's divine characters, in both *God's Gift* and *The Infinities*, demonstrate repeatedly the disadvantages of being a god.

The mortal characters' lack of total knowledge regarding the situation they find themselves in leads them to question the knowledge that they do possess: namely, their sense of self and their memory of their own past. This is a key theme of *Amphitryon*, in which Amphitryon and Sosias, confronted by their own seemingly identical twins, are forced to doubt their very sense of self, and in which Alkmene doubts her memory, faculties and senses. The faultiness of memory is a key theme in Banville's works, in which protagonists frequently revisit the landscapes of their past, both literally and figuratively. Throughout Banville's works, characters review their lives in an attempt to identify the point of no return - the moment when everything changed definitively and their fate was secured. This is alluded to as a theme early in *The Infinities*. Old Adam suffers a stroke before the novel begins; Hermes tells us that, therefore, old Adam was already a 'goner' before the moment of the stroke because, unbeknownst to him, his blood was leaking (2010:17). Only later occurrences allow the characters to gain knowledge about themselves. Kleist's *Amphitryon* has often been compared to his 'Die Marquise von O.', in which a woman, raped while unconscious, finds herself pregnant without any memory of how this came about (cf. Brown 1998:271). Consider also statements on the origin of memory and imagination, found throughout Banville's texts, such as the following example from *The Infinities*: 'The antique lavatory seat […]

reminds her of the collar of a work-horse - but where would she ever have seen such a thing?' (53). The characters constantly try to locate the source of their thoughts, their analogies, their memory, and fear that their thoughts may be false.

If the gods possess full knowledge of the situation, and the mortal characters incomplete knowledge, what of the reader? The theme of mistaken identities and characters appearing to have identical twins do not function as mere plot devices. In the source text, *God's Gift* and *The Infinities* the reader is supposedly fully aware of the "real" state of affairs from more or less the beginning, having had it explained by the Mercury or Hermes narrator-type character.

Viewed broadly, in *The Infinities* it is not just the characters who are twinned; in effect, the entire world of the story has a twin, or rather infinite near-identical siblings. Friberg-Harnesk describes *The Infinities* taking place in a future time, but this wording fails to convey the fact that we seem to be actually not in an invented future time but in a parallel universe (2018). It is only as the reader progresses through the novel and reads references to 'Schrösteinberg's cat' (35) or Mary Queen of Scots beheading Elizabeth (39) that he or she will realise that the world of *The Infinities* is a universe parallel to ours; that, in fact, the reader does not possess the same level of knowledge as the gods, who are able to view all universes. The speed with which the reader realises the setting is a parallel universe will vary from individual to individual, depending upon his or her own cultural and historical knowledge. In accordance with the heliocentric universe discovered by Copernicus, we are not the centre of the universe - in the world of *The Infinities*, the reader is one of the ghosts or twins which appear to hover in the background, and which form such a consistent feature of Banville's writing. Thus the novel itself, and not just its plot, is a self-reflexive comment on realising later that one

assumed, but actually lacks, knowledge; and on not being able to trust one's senses. The reader is put into the place of Alcmene. Hermes and old Adam share narrator duties until they blend and it becomes difficult or impossible to discern which is speaking. This allows the author himself to be present in the text in a certain sense, as Banville is in others of his texts (for example, the character of writer 'JB' in his 2012 novel *Ancient Light* (see Clark 2012)). Banville, the author, becomes the world-creating god, and Banville's reader is put into the place of Kleist's mortal characters. But what does it mean to be the world-creating authority? Does this position even exist?

Imitating, acting, playing a role: these are key features of *Amphitryon*, in which 'Schein' displaces 'Sein'. Beyond the more obvious candidates for discussion, analysis of Helen's characterisation - *The Infinities'* version of Alcmene or Minna - is worth conducting in this light. Of Kleist's source text, Brown states: 'Alkmene is only *herself*, probably the one character in the play who is not assuming a role' (1998:281). It is debatable whether the same could be said to be true of Minna, who is *herself* to some extent but who also, due to the incongruity of the classical gods appearing within the Christian setting, seems to be playing a role to a certain degree, as stated above. In *The Infinities*, however, Helen is a professional at assuming roles: she is an actress, starring as Alcmene in a version of *God's Gift*. In *The Infinities* Helen occasionally appears to think lines from *God's Gift* to herself - but is she genuinely feeling these emotions, or is she just quoting the lines from the play? Is this even Helen's thought, or are these lines of text merely inserted into the main narrative by an outside source? If so, who is this source? The author? A god? Both or neither of these? These are not questions that can be answered; and I would argue that the very point of Banville's playful style is to evoke the ambiguity that such intertextuality engenders.

A particularly playful piece of intertextuality that has, to my knowledge, not yet been noted by critical literature within the field, is a play on Alcmene's famous 'Ach!'. In *God's Gift*, this final enigmatic expression of Alcmene's confusion and loss is translated as 'Ah!' (72). So far, so straightforward, one might think. However, the same moment, within a different context, occurs in *The Infinities*. As in the source text, the novel closes with Helen and her husband being "told" of her pregnancy by Hermes. ''Ah,' she says, 'ahh,' then sneezes' (295). 'Ach' becomes 'achoo', and for the reader of *The Infinities* who knows Kleist's play, the sudden undermining of the seriousness of the situation by a humorous bodily function will provoke laughter and subvert their expectations.

In *Heinrich von Kleist: Artistic and Political Legacies* High remarks that Kleist's enduring legacy is founded on matters which 'likely will continue to matter as long as individuals despair at the insight into their own inability to conclude what might happen next, based on the fragmented knowledge of what has happened thus far; and as long as the public delights in the algebra of disorientation, and artists calculate how to disorient audiences' (2013:22). Kleist's world has a certain complicated logic, as reflected in his syntax. Constantine comments of Kleist's syntax: 'Kleist makes sense' (appendix B). *The Infinities* explores the 'algebra of disorientation' through the character of a scientist and mathematician whose equations aim to make sense of the world.

Women and Metaphor: *Penthesilea* and *Love in the Wars*

Love in the Wars (2005) is a play in blank verse from the German source text, *Penthesilea* (1808). Whilst *God's Gift* and *The Infinities* transport the action from the

source text's Ancient Greece to Ireland, 1798, and what amounts to modern-day Ireland respectively, the setting of *Love in the Wars* remains in the time and place of the source text: classical antiquity, during the Trojan War. Whilst it may seem that it is more pressing for the reader of Banville's two versions of *Amphitryon* to consider the reasons behind the change in setting, than for the reader of *Love in the Wars* to consider the reasons behind the retention of Kleist's setting, choosing not to change the setting is a choice in itself. Are there resonances for Banville's target text which would be altered if the setting were updated? A possible line of enquiry is the Trojan War. Perhaps the most well-known fact about the Trojan War, outside of the story of the Trojan Horse, is that it was caused by (the abduction of) Helen. Banville states this in his target text even more explicitly than in the source text, with his Agamemnon 'wearily' saying: 'It was a woman brought us here, and now/ Another woman comes to cause us grief. What if our wives at home should hear of this?' (2005:18). The setting of *Love in the Wars* is a conflict particularly noted for its gendered aspects. Helen being blamed for starting the Trojan War - when the war is the combat of two male groups - is paralleled in the Greeks' opportunistic exploitation of the Amazons in the target text: the Greeks hope to use the Amazons to advance their own causes, with Agamemnon making his position clear: 'What does it count for what these Amazons/ May want?' (2005:18). The Amazons are not the Greeks', nor the Trojans', primary opponent; like Helen, the Amazons have entered a male sphere but do not play the crucial role within it. They are dismissed and ridiculed by the other characters, despite their obvious prowess. Throughout the target text, Achilles and Odysseus trade insults by comparing the other to a girl, or worse than a girl: thus Odysseus laughs at Achilles: 'The son of Thetis, rescued by a girl!/ I really cannot wait to see his face!' (2005:16). Gendered insults are

a way for Odysseus and Achilles to snipe at each other, with the derided female element the weapon. Wolf comments that 'gendered imagery predominates in this "othering" of Penthesilea' by the men (2000:194), and it is clear that Banville retains this theme. The battle of the sexes is the battle of self versus other.

The target text opens explicitly and emphatically with the men's dismissive attitude towards women, with dialogue that has no direct correlation in the source text. Even Odysseus, the "good guy", or character with whom the audience is most likely to relate, is a keen participant: he 'laugh[s]' in his recounting of the Amazons actions, calling it 'the damnedest thing' (9); says 'they're only women, true' (9); and speculates 'She must have changed her mind, as women will' (10). Furthermore, Banville's Amazons preemptively anticipate the scorn that the men will show towards them, and express their own: Penthesilea's lines in the opening scene include: 'The men have come to tell us what to do' and 'Men never understand what women do' (12). Such explicit statements are not present in the source text. In this way, Banville's target text sets out the gender divide immediately.

Banville's play also gives the final word to the Greeks, who in the target text's final scene state that Prothoë is going to sue for peace, and ruminate on whether they could have saved Achilles and how Achilles's reputation will live on in posterity. The last of the final words goes to Odysseus, who makes a pithy comment: 'To die's a fine thing, I suppose - but give me life.' (2005:78). Banville frequently includes in his works sarcastic characters who function as commentators on the action. In *God's Gift* and *The Infinities*, Hermes and Mercury fulfil this function, to a greater extent than in the source text; here, in *Love in the Wars*, the same occurs, with Odysseus throughout the object of much of the audience's focus with his sarcastic, ironic asides that seem to

speak directly to the audience and are therefore likely to encourage the audience to share that character's viewpoint. The role of the wisecracking outsider is typically male and implies a certain kind of superiority by not being caught up in the action. Achilles also assumes this role in Scene 13 of the TT, in which Penthesilea explains to him the origins and function of the all-female Amazon state. Surreptitiously smiling and laughing, and picking up on any possible source of innuendo in Penthesilea's speech, Achilles makes sly remarks on the words 'blow', 'sore', and 'hard' (2005:54-55).

The combined effect of the above is to take the emphasis away from Penthesilea, from the tragic and shocking events of the play's ending, and, ultimately, from the women themselves. By taking the audience's attention back to the real-world conclusion of affairs (i.e. what will happen in the war between the Greeks and Amazons), Banville seems to dismiss the ST's interest in intensity of emotion and reinforce a stereotypically masculine interest in practicality. Odysseus' final statement in the TT is in direct opposition to the final statement of the ST, made by Prothoë about the deceased Penthesilea, and not present at all in the TT:

> Sie sank, weil sie zu stolz und kräftig blühte!
> Die abgestorbne Eiche steht im Sturm,
> Doch die gesunde stürzt er schmetternd nieder,
> Weil er in ihre Krone greifen kann (2013:428)

In the TT Prothoë merely comments that it is better that Penthesilea is dead, 'For there was no help for her on this earth.' (2005:77). Any admiration attached to Penthesilea's actions appears to be diminished by Banville.

A significant number of Achilles' lines in the target text involve him imposing his voice into the dialogue, demanding a right to speak, or shaping what the other characters say to each other. The following list of examples is evidence of the frequency with which Achilles makes these statements: 'Don't start that whinge!',

'*(Puts on whining voice [*mocking Odysseus*])*' (13); 'let me have my say-!', 'My King, I wish to speak!' (17); 'And I say you are cowards! King, hear me' (18); to Penthesilea: 'Tell them to shoot' (23); 'What do you mean [...]?' (23); 'I heard [what Agamemnon said]!/ But I won't heed' (24); 'You shouldn't think [...]', 'Do as she says' (41); 'But tell me', 'But tell me how?' (55); 'Tell me what happened, man, come on!', 'I told you' (59); 'now listen, not a word/ To old Odysseus', 'Here's how it is', 'I told you', 'Look, listen, here's the way it is' (67); 'I told you not to tell him, damn it!', 'Don't clench your jaw at me like that', 'You talk to me of Troy?' (68); 'Yes, friend, I'm serious!' (69); 'Don't condescend to me' (70). Achilles must always have control of the dialogue, the narrative.

Banville's Achilles is the most blatant example of the above; however, the language of 'having one's say' is also characteristic of the scenes in which Odysseus and Achilles clash. In Scene Three of Banville's text Agamemnon addresses his commanders, asking them - or rather Odysseus - for information and counsel. The dialogue follows a structure in which practically every utterance comprises, or is introduced by or ended with, a demand or an exhortation to speak: 'You say [...]'; 'let me have my say-!'; 'What say you [...]?'; 'I wish to speak!'; 'silence!'; 'Well, go on?'; 'So I say: let her at it' (17); 'And I say'; 'hear me' (18).

Odysseus and the structure of the play provide the typically masculine framing element. The action and characters are introduced by Odysseus' wry remarks in the opening scene, and the events of the play and the actions of the characters that take place are summarised by Odysseus' wry remarks in the closing scene.

That is not to say that Banville's portrayal allies itself to its male characters and their "superior" rationality. One would hope that the majority of spectators viewing

Banville's *Love in the Wars*, at any time since its first publication and production in 2005, would baulk at the blatant misogyny either explicitly stated, or implied, by all of the male characters in *Love in the Wars*. This criticism of the male attitude is a significant feature of the ST (see, for example, Brown's analysis of Kleist's depiction of Achilles: 1998:309-10); Banville emphasises it, and, moreover, must be aware that he is writing for a twenty-first-century audience who as a whole will be much more practised in noticing and condemning such things than an audience of Kleist's time. Banville's Achilles is deeply unsympathetic: his first appearance has him verbally and physically abusing an underling, and the antagonism between him and Odysseus is revealed in bitter and spiteful jibes. However, it is Achilles' arrogance in his aggressive and sexually explicit descriptions of his intention to 'tame' Penthesilea (2005:18) which are likely to be most objectionable. It is difficult not to be on Penthesilea's side, certainly against Achilles, and perhaps against all the Greeks. Moreover, in scene 13, the interaction between Achilles and Penthesilea mentioned above, Banville has Penthesilea naively, and with, one suspects, some irritation, challenge Achilles about his laughter and joking at her description of the Amazonian rites, constantly throughout the scene: 'You laugh?/ You think this is funny?' (2005:52); 'Why are you smiling?' 'you smiled!/ You did, I saw you!' (53) 'What do you mean?'(54) 'Have you been listening to me?' (55). Whilst the effect of this could be to portray a stereotypical relationship of a detached, wry husband and a nagging wife, some readers, at least, will sympathise with the almost painfully earnest Penthesilea here, and dislike Achilles still further both for his patronising mockery of that earnestness and for sexualising at every opportunity the women's politics and society.

Not all of the gender-based ridiculing between Banville's Greeks and Amazons is based on fixed stereotypes. Disruption of assumptions based on gender, with their origins in Kleist's text, are present in Banville's target text, even coming from characters who appear to be most fervent in their urge to separate men and women. Banville's Achilles, whom Banville deems as 'even among the Greeks [...] a dreadful creature' (appendix A), acknowledges without surprise Penthesilea's sexual drive and specific desire for him:

> Achilles: She runs with girls, while longing for a man.
> I know the type; I've tamed her kind before.
> Give me the chance, I'll wind her silken hair
> Around my fist, and tear her from her steed,
> And plough her in the ruts of Ilium's field! (18)

Kleist's Achilles makes a similar statement:

> Achilles: Und wenn ich dieser mich gesperrt bis heute,
> Beim Zeus, des Donners Gott, geschah's, weil ich
> Das Plätzchen unter Büschen noch nicht fand,
> Sie ungestört, ganz wie ihr Herz es wünscht,
> Auf Küßen heiß von Erz im Arm zu nehmen (2013:342)

Given the propensity throughout human history to view women as inherently chaste and uninterested in sex, this is a modern stance espoused by Kleist, and retained in Banville's target text. Nevertheless, the context of this acknowledgment of female desire remains male violence, as Achilles' language expresses the want, or even need, to engage with Penthesilea sexually only insofar as he will 'tame' - or violently subjugate - her, and viciously assumes that this is what she, as a woman, will naturally want ('ganz wie ihr Herz es wünscht').

It should be acknowledged here that the entire basis of Kleist's play is the amalgamation of desire and violence. On this topic, Schneider writes: 'the protagonist's entire identity rests on battling against an antagonist who is simultaneously an object of

desire. The off-stage battles between Achilles and the Amazon queen, [...] are grandiose "mating duels" between partners of super-human dimensions' (2000:509). He goes on to add that 'the drama acts out to the extreme the paradox that the lovers can only find themselves in the utter subjection *to* and *of* the other' (2000:510). Banville's Penthesilea acknowledges the violence of this paradox explicitly, in language that does not have a direct correspondence in the source text: 'I'm torn in two./ One half of me would run from him, one half/ Would fling itself under his iron sole [...] my mind is sick,/ My heart is sicker still... I'm torn in two' (37).

Given Banville's enduring preoccupation with the self and the other, it is no wonder that *Penthesilea* appealed to him sufficiently to prompt his adaptation of the text. Consider, for example, the following statement, addressed by Kleist in an 1800 letter to his sister Ulrike, and often quoted in relation to *Penthesilea*:

> Amphibion du, das in zwei Elementen stets lebet,
> Schwanke nicht länger und wähle dir endlich ein sichres Geschlecht (2013:44)

Kleist bemoans his sister's gender-neutral appearance and presentation, highly unusual at the time, by comparing her existence to that of an amphibian that lives within two habitats: earth and water. Banville's works frequently play with boundaries, particularly those between human and animal. *The Infinities* is a good example of this, in which Rex, the family's dog, is often personified. Meanwhile, Petra, the daughter of the family, is constantly described with animal imagery, and has the animal ability, shared with Rex, to sense the existence of the parallel worlds. This is also a reflection of his engagement with 'Über das Marionettentheater', which reflects upon the differences in consciousness between an animal, a man, and a god.

In a 2011 interview with Hugh Haughton, not discussing *Love in the Wars* but Banville's work in general, Banville and Haughton have the following exchange:

Banville:

I always feel—well, I'm of an age now where I can admit such a thing—but I always feel that I'm more female than male. I certainly have more affinity with women. Their minds seem to work in the way that mine works.

Haughton:

You talk about your sympathy with women, and female characters […] But, when writing in your first person, you have always written in the first person of a garrulous, intellectual, ambitious, and rather monstrous *male*—well, pretty well always, though not *always;* can you explain that?

Banville:

Well, I am an ambitious, garrulous, and monstrous male, of course—as well as being a woman. (Haughton and Radley 2011)

Haughton's sceptical response to Banville's declaration that he is a woman is justified. In this declaration itself Banville seems to imply the almost shameful aspects of admitting one shares similarities with another gender: his phrasing 'I'm of an age now where I can admit such a thing' is meant light-heartedly, with a similar statement later in the interview drawing laughter from the audience, but it does imply that during one's youth – i.e. during what is typically considered to be the time of peak sexuality – it is detrimental to admit, at least for a man, that one identifies with a so-called feminine nature.

Whilst I do not wish to propose that Banville *is* any of his characters, his novels would, as Haughton says, seem to suggest that his view of women appears to be as something completely foreign. In fact, in suggesting there is a marked difference in the way the minds of men and women work, Banville is pursuing a potentially reductive path that leads to the kind of discrimination that we witness and presumably condemn in *Penthesilea* and *Love in the Wars*.

Is it fair to make this claim? Even if one disregards the texts themselves, and only relies on Banville's own comments on his perceptions of the differences, or lack thereof, between men and women, the researcher is still on slippery ground. In my interview with Banville, we had the following exchange:

> HT: You mentioned in an interview with Hugh Haughton that sometimes you feel that you're more female than male, perhaps in your writing persona, or that you have an affinity with women. I think that's interesting in relation to all of the adaptations, not just *Love in the Wars*.

> JB: My idea of hell would be a dinner party consisting entirely of men that goes on for eternity. Oh my God! I mean, men are for the most part stupid and boring, obsessed with themselves. Men never ever get over the loss of the mother. From the age of about four on they're saying, 'Where's she gone? What am I going to do now?' I have two daughters and two sons. My sons are middle-aged men, they're older than me, I think, and I see on their faces this look, which I have as well, this look of puzzlement, whereas my girls… at the age of about eleven or twelve girls look around and say, 'I see how this is done', and men hate them for it. Men immediately have to keep them down. You look at any playground for education and school and girls will be getting it from the boys. And my wife, who is a teacher, says it's fascinating because she used to teach classes of children aged 10, 11 and 12, and she said it was fascinating to watch the way the girls, clever girls, when they got to about 11, would say, 'Being clever's not going to get me anywhere. I'm going to start pretending to be stupid.' And I think that's true. I think that women have been told that they're creatures of intuition, which they are, but what's wrong with being intuitive? I wish men had more intuition.

> HT: Do you see it as something fundamentally different in the male and female personalities?

> JB: Oh absolutely, absolutely. I've never gotten used to there being women on earth. I think this is a place made for men. It's cruel and savage and stupid, but it's also exquisitely beautiful, which is where the women come in. But most men probably regard me as a complete sissy, always mooning after women. I know many men who just tolerate women, whereas I find women infinitely interesting, they've always fascinated me, and I fall in love two or three times a week, still. [...] In *Penthesilea* you can see that Kleist understands women and their predicament. (appendix A)

Friberg-Harnesk, meanwhile, makes the following observation, quoting Banville from an interview she held with him:

> When questioned about his depiction of women, John Banville answered that he does not regard women as different from men:

> People say to me, when are you going to write about women? But I write about women all the time! Somehow we're in an age where people feel you have to make a special case, but I don't see that there is a special… they're all the same to me. (Friberg-Harnesk 2018:6, quoting Banville)

Incidentally, the discrepancy between Banville's statements puts me in mind of another exchange he and I shared during our interview:

> JB: I have this ambition to write my autobiography in which everything is slightly wrong. I'll say I had two brothers, instead of which I had a brother and a sister, and I'll do interviews where I'll say, 'No, you've got it wrong, Wikipedia is wrong, this is the truth'. And people would say, 'What?!' And I'd say, 'Do you think I'd lie to you?' [laughs] Just slightly off.
> HT: A bit like *The Infinities*, where everything is not exactly like you'd expect it to be.
> JB: Yes. (appendix A)

And indeed, Friberg-Harnesk, who notes that in other interviews Banville has in fact claimed that he "never understood women. Never will, don't want to", also expresses the opinion that this argument may indeed fall into the realm of 'tongue-in-cheek' inconsistency, further opining that, on this point, as well as many others, Banville's fictions 'put much in question' (2018:6).

Whether Banville is deliberately making contradictory statements regarding his views on women and his female characters, to confuse his critics; whether his position varies over time, as is, after all, his right; or whether his statements are not necessarily mutually exclusive, is not possible to establish. What can be stated with some certainty is that Friberg-Harnesk evinces some scepticism regarding Banville's declaration that men and women are the same to him - 'to my mind, though, Banville does make a special case for some women' (2018:6) - and that, as she lays out, critics of Banville's texts have devoted some time to pondering this 'irksome' question (ibid.).

Whilst, then, Banville's statements may be somewhat dubious if considered in the light of gender debates, it is still useful to consider them in terms of analysing his texts. Of the "woman" question, McMinn goes on to say: 'If there is a romantic quest here, I suggest that it turns upon the search for a lost unity, notably in the masculine personality, between the imaginative and rational faculties, or between body and mind' (1999:2). Here we begin to see what might have attracted Banville to *Penthesilea*. Gender is used as a means by which to portray these imaginative and rational faculties, with Kleist's Penthesilea herself an unusual character who is masculine in many ways but who embraces her imaginative and emotional faculties so intensely that she is able physically to kill herself with them. Banville's works have used many different themes to explore the relations between the 'imaginative and rational faculties': scientific discovery, in the Revolutions series; visual art, in the Freddie Montgomery series; and the gods of classical antiquity, in *The Infinities*. With *Penthesilea* Banville has the source material to address this theme again. It is perhaps then surprising that in its closing scenes, Banville brings his text back to real-world considerations and does not revel in Penthesilea's final appearance.

In *Love in the Wars* the final scene of the source text, which is the penultimate scene in the target text, is considerably shortened, with Penthesilea realising much more quickly what she has done: i.e. brutally killed Achilles, with whom she was in love, and more or less cannibalised his corpse. In the source text Penthesilea kills herself with what seems to be sheer force of will, or, rather, intensity of emotion - Kleist makes it quite clear that she lays aside her arrows and simply dies after conjuring a dagger made out of, or by means of, grief, remorse and hope. In the target text Penthesilea commits

suicide by stabbing herself with an actual arrow, which she does describe in metaphorical language, as in the source text, but which nevertheless physically exists.

A further removal of metaphor - of the arch emblem and the oak emblem - has ramifications for Banville's text beyond a generalised statement that the text is less metaphorical than Kleist's text. I am not forgetting here that a typical reader or audience member of Banville's play may well not have any familiarity with Kleist's text. Nevertheless, by comparing what is not present in Banville's text, we can consider the ways in which the characterisation differs between the two versions, and thereby gain insight into what is present in Banville's text. In this case, Banville's Prothoe does not exhort Penthesilea to stand firm like the arch that remains standing when everything is urging it to fall; nor does she comment, at the play's end, that Penthesilea fell in the same way that a healthy oak is felled by a storm when a dying oak survives it ('Sie sank, weil sie zu stolz und kräftig blühte!'). This reduces the impression, discussed by Schneider in 'Standing and Falling in Heinrich von Kleist' (2000:513), that Penthesilea is a character of exceptional heroism, which Schneider sees as accompanying the catastrophic fall.

In 'Kleist's Female Leading Characters and the Subversion of Idealist Discourse' McAllister argues that the Greeks, in Kleist's play, are depicted as works of art; citing, as evidence, the moment when Odysseus describes Penthesilea seeing the Greeks for the first time, looking at them with a blank expression 'als ob in Stein gehau'n wir vor ihr stünden' (2005:152). Penthesilea is, according to McAllister, textless, inscrutable, and it is for this reason that Achilles is driven to mark her, inscribe her body with bloody marks, to make a knowable text of the other. Banville chooses to show this moment physically on stage:

Behind [the Greeks], the stage lights suddenly come on, revealing a tableau: a band of Amazons and Prothoe and, in their midst, Penthesilea. All are posed, perfectly still, dressed in battle-dress and armed with javelins and bows and arrows.

Odysseus: Penthesilea. (2005:11)

Penthesilea does turn her gaze on the Greek generals, in turn. However, due to the lighting, the positioning on stage, and the fact that Odysseus is actively talking during this part of the scene, I would argue that the effect in production is likely to be that the Amazons, and not the Greeks, are seen here as the work of art.

McMinn analyses the role of women in Banville's oeuvre. He notes that in *Ghosts*, in a period of self-reflection, Freddie Montgomery states that his fascination with women is not based on sexual desire. McMinn makes explicit that Freddie is interested in gender, rather than sex (1999:120). McMinn argues that the Freddie Montgomery texts are 'testimonies of artful voyeurs, men whose imagination is fixated upon pictures' of women (1999:10). McMinn argues that in these texts Banville associates 'speechless art' with the feminine and language with the masculine (ibid.).

The opening tableau in Banville's text is reminiscent of Kleist's *Prinz Friedrich von Homburg:* the eponymous protagonist is announced. As has been noted by critics, Kleist's *Prinz Friedrich von Homburg* opens in the style of Greek drama with its first words, spoken by Hohenzollern, proclaiming the name of the principal character, as a grammatical subject: 'Der Prinz von Homburg' (see Swales 1982:409). In this scene, the other characters are grouped around the Prince, observing him as he sleepwalks; due to their differing states of consciousness, there is naturally a feeling of separation between the Prince and the group. Swales argues that Kleist's syntax in this opening speech immediately goes on to undermine the Prince as a subject, since, without

including any predicate corresponding to that opening subject, the Prince becomes an object, in the dative case; and since the remainder of Hohenzollern's speech includes imagery that compares the Prince to a subservient animal (1982:409).

I would argue that something similar is happening in the first scene of *Love in the Wars*, as Odysseus introduces Penthesilea:

> *Behind them, the stage lights suddenly come on, revealing a tableau: a band of Amazons and Prothoë and, in their midst, Penthesilea. All are posed, perfectly still, dressed in battle-dress and armed with javelins and bows and arrows.*

Odysseus: Penthesilea.

> *Pause. Penthesilea, perfectly impassive, looks slowly first at Odysseus, then at Antilochus, finally settling her gaze on Achilles.*

> Great Queen, we come in friendship, as you see.
> I am Odysseus, general of the Greeks.
> Here is Antilochus, a general too,
> And here is the great Achilles, Peleus' son.
> We come to say, how glad we Argives are
> To find in you an enemy of our foes.
> Long years we've fought the Trojans, bitter years,
> Far from our country, home and families
> We've little stomach left for making war.
> *Achilles glares at him angrily.*
> We watched you yesterday put them to rout,
> Deiphobus and his troops; you fought like… well,
> Like men! (2005:11-2)

Here, Penthesilea is, like the Prince, proclaimed in the manner of Greek epic drama. The staging, with the stage lights, the tableau aspect, and the women's 'perfectly still' posing, visually identifies them as a separate group from the men, existing almost on a separate plane. It also makes the women, and Penthesilea, into aesthetic objects. Despite Penthesilea's initial status as the grammatical subject, the Queen, like Homburg, becomes the grammatical object of the remainder of the speech. Odysseus' speech concentrates on the men, declaring their names, their roles, and the situation.

His speech, with its usual cleverness, makes an attempt to appeal to what he believes will stir the sympathy of the women: their homes and their families. When the women do then enter back into his speech, it is first as a visual object ('we watched you') and, when Odysseus implies praise of their actions, he expresses this by assigning them the prowess of men, further undermining their identity and agency.

While Banville has not translated P*rinz Friedrich von Homburg*, there are similarities between Penthesilea and that play. Both the Prince and the Amazon Queen combine aspects of traditionally masculine and feminine attributes. They are fearsome warriors but also dreamers, emotional, susceptible to being aestheticised.

This framing also occurs when the men are directly speaking to the women. Consider, for example, Odysseus' first address to Penthesilea. I have shown above how the speech focuses on the men as subject. When Odysseus does turn the attention back to Penthesilea, it is as follows:

> Odysseus:And now King Agamemnon asks
> That you will join with us, to bring down Troy…
> [...]
> Have you an answer, Queen, that we may bring
> To Agamemnon - ?

Here, in both main clauses Penthesilea is the grammatical subject. Nevertheless, she is also framed, in a chiasmus structure, by the figure of Agamemnon, and the men are very much still present within the text, asking and demanding so that the men can further their own cause: 'join with *us'*, 'an answer [...] *we* may bring' (emphasis my own).

In Banville's version of *Penthesilea*, which was written with performance in mind, the women are portrayed as visual objects, and as the Other. This is consistent with Banville's oeuvre, and supports statements that he has made claiming that the sensibility of women is entirely different to that of man.

Crime in *The Broken Jug, Snow* and *The Book of Evidence*

Banville's *The Broken Jug* is a comedy set in the midst of an iconic national tragedy - the Great Famine - and in a setting in which even the more vulnerable characters of the source text, whether Irish or English, are shown to be complicit in scheming. Eve and Robert are vulnerable in different ways: Eve in her position as a woman whose honour has been potentially damaged but also who, due to her leg disability, is considered to be 'damaged goods' (60); Robert as a poorer 'papist', accused of rebellion, and tenant of the Reck family (59). Both, as the audience comes to learn by the end of the play, are aware that their engagement is of a transactional nature, with each out to get something from the other. Lynch (Irish) and Ball (English) both suffer due to their lack of power in relation to their masters, and the audience is led to admire/like and simultaneously despise their underhand ways. Meanwhile the English Sir Walter, who might be expected to be a clear villain, is, by means of Kleist's plot, something like the hero by the end of the text even as he proclaims the 'state's authority' (80), and both enquires into, but is easily diverted from, the suffering of the starving peasants. Judge Adam, who, as in the ST, is at once likeable and diabolical, and who in the TT is also, notably, landlord and 'the government's corn agent' (1994:30), uses his position to steal money from the village. At the beginning of the second act Banville inserts a scene, not found

in the ST, in which Judge Adam and Sir Walter eat lunch and discuss the famine. The audience is not allowed to forget the very human aspects of the tragedy: as the officials dine, 'the faces of hungry people come and go at the window, and Judge Adam in dumbshow keeps trying to wave them away' (56). How can an Irish, or any, audience be expected to sympathise at all with any character who benefits from this specific system, playing as it is on a key, iconic national memory of tragedy? And yet we do sympathise with and even like these characters, even the most morally corrupt. By setting his play in a very specific historical context, during a tragedy the outcome of which will be very familiar to a modern Irish audience, Banville makes even more prominent the complicated and ambiguous scenario found in the source text, as well as emphasising the tragic irony of the situation, in which the audience has every reason to believe that the corruption embodied by Adam will not be eradicated with his dismissal.

On a broader level, the broken jug itself, which is not only representative of Eve's virginity but also, in this target text, of Irish history and culture (with the lengthy description of the jug given by Banville's Martha a description of Irish history and tradition, rather than the situation of the source text (the Netherlands under Spanish rule)), can be read as a metaphor for Ireland, continually violated by the English and Irish officials.

To appreciate more fully how this metaphor functions, it is important to begin by interrogating Banville's use of character names. Banville is not shy of changing the names of characters in the source text. As noted in Chapter 2, Licht of the source text becomes Lynch, a much more straight-forwardly violent name, and one that seems to reflect and presage the unrest caused by the British occupation in Ireland both before the date of the play's setting and until the time of Banville's writing.

Walter of the source text, however, is still Walter in the target text. Banville does, however, give Sir Walter a sly surname, which is repeated during the target text and which is also made the subject of a joke ('Sir high and mighty Orange Peel' (25)). Why bother giving the assessor a surname in the first place, much less emphasising it? The surname in question is Peel, with the assessor as Sir Walter Peel. Sir Robert Peel (1788-1850) was the British Prime Minister twice during his life: 1834-5 and 1841-46. He was, therefore, Prime Minister during the outbreak of the Irish potato famine, and had resigned only two months before the events of *The Broken Jug* occur. Peel is remembered for several legacies, including the establishment of the modern police force and reform of the criminal justice system. It is in his handling of the Irish Potato Famine that he is most relevant here. Although Peel was kinder to Ireland than his successor, Lord John Russell, who is also mentioned in the target text, Peel's attempts to rectify the situation in Ireland were slow and ineffectual - he was famously quoted as saying: 'There is such a tendency to exaggerate and inaccuracy in Irish reports that delay in acting on them is always desirable' (Peel, quoted in Lengel 2002:61), appearing, whether deliberately or otherwise, to misunderstand the severity of the situation. Naturally, the surname also allows Banville to make a joke of 'orange peel', reminiscent of the Orange Order, the Irish unionists who want Ireland to remain part of the United Kingdom; and of William of Orange, an icon of Protestantism.

Banville's Sir Walter Peel appears to wish to help the Irish system he is inspecting and is outraged by Adam's corruption of it. At the same time, he demonstrates a wilful ignorance of his own government's role in causing the famine: 'I'm told this rainy weather brings on blight' (1994:27); he acknowledges but does not verify the validity of the fact that Irish, local law existed before Ireland's colonisation

by the British, and the difficulties that the superseding of one law by the other might cause, merely trailing off and thereby abdicating any responsibility: 'Too often English rule is seen as harsh,/ Ignoring local customs, local rights…/ My brief is to observe, and to report' (28); he seems to accept Judge Adam's explanation, not foreign to our own times, that the starving peasants have only themselves to blame for being 'scroungers' (29) who 'won't work' (30); and he openly calls Ireland a 'godforsaken' (48) and (75) 'benighted' country where the social classes mix far too much (56). Those familiar with Sir Robert Peel's treatment of Ireland during the famine will notice links between the real British Prime Minister and the fictitious official that go far beyond their name; those members of an Irish audience not familiar with the identity of the Prime Minister who presided over the beginning of the famine are nevertheless likely to recognise in Sir Walter the supercilious, interfering and ultimately ineffectual English official.

The resonances of Sir Walter's name do not, however, end there. In an aside Banville's Judge Adam refers to Sir Walter as 'Swisser Swasser' (39). This is a reference to Aubrey's biography of Sir Walter Raleigh, from a story in which Sir Walter seduces, or rather rapes, a young woman, whose cries of 'Will you undoe me? […] Sweet Sir Walter!' become 'Swisser Swasser' during the act (Aubrey in Lee 2009). Parallels to the situation of Kleist's play, where a young woman is undone by an older man, are apparent, with Judge Adam's reference to Sir Walter as Swisser Swasser seeming to implicate Sir Walter in such an abuse of power. Furthermore, the most prominent use of this phrase, outside of its origin, is in a Seamus Heaney poem titled 'Ocean's Love to Ireland' (1974):

> Speaking broad Devonshire,
> Raleigh has backed the maid to a tree
>   As Ireland is backed to England

And drives inland
Till all her strands are breathless: 'Sweesir, Swatter! Sweesir, Swatter! '
He is water, he is ocean, lifting
Her farthingale like a scarf of weed lifting
In the front of a wave.

[…]

The ruined maid complains in Irish,
Ocean has scattered her dream of fleets,
The Spanish prince has spilled his gold
And failed her. Iambic drums
Of English beat the woods where her poets
  Sink like Onan. Rush-light, mushroom-flesh,
She fades from their somnolent clasp
Into ringlet-breath and dew,
The ground possessed and repossessed.

Here, Heaney uses the imagery of sexual violence to suggest that England has raped

Ireland in the same way that Raleigh raped the young woman. Intertextuality is typical

of Banville's works, and here the allusion implies that both Judge Adam's and Sir

Walter's involvement in the Irish government is a damaging and unlawful abuse of the

system.

For it is not just Sir Walter who represents the British government in this text.

Although Judge Adam is an Irishman, he is allied with the English:

Judge Adam: I know I'm just a country magistrate,
                        But on such chaps as me the empire stands,
                        For we're the backbone, or the feet, at least,
                        Upholding little laws, and keeping guard,
                        And watching out for native restiveness.
Sir Walter: But yet you are an Irishman.
Judge Adam: Of course!
                        Who better to keep watch over the Irish?
                        But for all that I am as good a Tory
                        As any true-born, native Englishman. (1994:57)

Whether or not he merely says this to win favour with Sir Walter, ultimately he is supposed to be imposing British law on the Irish, and he certainly profits from his position.

Also important in Banville's text are the questions of land and class. Toby Reck, late husband of Martha and father of Eve, bought cheap land previously owned by Willie Temple, father of Robert, 'Threw out the sitting tenants, every one,/ Broke up the fields and leased them out in parcels/ No bigger than a bloody postage stamp - /The trick is known as rundale' (59). Notably, Judge Adam also leases land in this manner, which he calls an act of 'charity' (26-7). The process of leasing small sections of land profited the landlords, who could thereby collect more rent. It was also a major cause of the famine: peasant families possessed so little land to farm that they could only survive if they exclusively grew potatoes; consequently when the potato crop failed, no other crop existed as a substitute. The Recks, a Protestant family that had migrated to Ireland from England several generations ago, are of a higher economic class than the Temples, a 'native Irish' Catholic family.

The Recks' privileged position is also demonstrated by a small shift from the ST: whereas in the ST Adam throws sand into Ruprecht's eyes to blind him, in the TT Adam throws bonemeal which is being used to fertilise the Recks' roses. The Recks are able to fertilise roses whilst others are starving. The point is driven home by the semantic similarity between 'bonemeal' and 'corn meal', with corn meal playing a significant part in the development of the famine: whilst Irish corn was being exported to England for the profit of the rich, a small amount of Indian corn meal, entirely inadequate to solve the crisis, was being imported into Ireland under the orders of Sir Robert Peel. This low-quality food became known as 'Peel's brimstone', reflecting the

hellish situation. It is no coincidence that Banville makes his Judge Adam the corn

agent, and has Sir Walter Peel explicitly put Lynch in charge of 'food relief' and the

'corn stores' (83).

Martha's lengthy description of the appearance and history of the jug (42-43)

includes numerous references to figures from Irish history and folklore, amongst which

is the figure of Kathleen Ni Houlihan, who is often depicted as a female personification

of Ireland. If the jug represents Irish history, and thereby Ireland, and Eve, like the

young maid of Heaney's poem, also represents Ireland, the breaking of the jug, and its

implied breaking of Eve's chastity, is a figurative destruction of Ireland by the English

and representatives of the English.

Also worth consideration is the way in which Sir Walter uses Dublin, the Irish

capital, as shorthand for the British authorities, since they controlled the capital at this

point:

> Sir Walter: if I find
> That matters are in order, then be sure
> That Dublin will be told who should be thanked.
> The Lord Lieutentant's wishes here are plain (28)

'Dublin' in this context as a linguistic sign signifies both the Irish capital and its very

opposite, the British state's authority. There is a double meaning present that

destabilises the notion of solitary, unified meaning of a sign, as discussed with relation

to Banville and Kleist by Murphy (2018) and Friberg-Harnesk (2018). Here, Banville's

linguistic play to create double layers of meaning is intimately tied to, and dependent

on, the political context.

Thus whilst Banville is justified in his statement that he is not making political points (however we wish to define 'political points'), the writing is nevertheless political.

If the whole system is corrupt, humanity cannot be trusted to enact justice. The play takes place in the fictional Irish village of Ballybog. The word 'ballybog' has been used in Irish mythology to refer to a bog fairy. These creatures 'were said to fixate on people who were guilty of crimes [...] and would lead them astray while crossing the bogs' (Bane 2013:46). Banville's decision to use this term for his fictional village is ironic, in that it evokes connotations of divine justice. If authorities will not exact justice for crimes, perhaps the people can turn to a mystical power, such as a fairy, who has a superhuman ability to determine a bogcrosser's guilt. It is worth noting that the mystical power, in this instance, originates not from a Christian god but from a figure of folklore, conceived throughout the centuries by the common oral tradition. It suggests another means by which people may satiate their need to believe in a higher power that will dole out rewards to the good and punishment to the bad. A reader familiar with Kleist's oeuvre, or Banville's oeuvre, will know that this does not always bear out. Kleist's *Novelle* 'Das Erdbeben in Chili' (1807) is a particularly well-known example of this concept. The text's protagonists, Josephe and Jeronimo, are sentenced to death due to society's condemnation of their extra-marital love; at the moment of greatest despair, an earthquake saves them, killing many of the city's residents. It seems as if God has intervened on their behalf, and yet, in the text's closing pages, both are murdered by the crowd in revenge. This text portrays the (im)possibility of relying on a divine justice to save the righteous and punish the wicked.

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Of 1950s Ireland, Banville says:

> And it was such a hidebound time. So there was a sense that we must absolutely hold fast to the rules. We must obey the church, obey figures of authority. That was what was so useful for this kind of plot, that it all depends on people being able to keep secrets with great ease, and have that great arrogance--which lasted in Ireland up till the early '90s--that says to the people, we don't need to tell you things. You're better off not knowing. We know, we're in control, we're the wise people, the great men (2007)

Griffiths notes that, in the *Variant* ending of *Der zerbrochne Krug*, Walter tells Eve that if she had told the truth earlier, the honour of the court would have been preserved. 'Walter lays down here the principle of a woman's guilt until she can prove her innocence, whereas he conspires to hide the male judge's guilt from the public despite compelling evidence. Critics nonetheless continue to regard Walter as an ideal figure in his desire for justice' (2020:170). In his version of *The Broken Jug*, Banville's Sir Walter makes it very clear, even after Judge Adam's guilt is revealed, that an individual's moral failing must not and does not reflect the institution: 'The man's a rogue, but also he's a judge;/ It is the bench that we must recognise, and not the man' (80).

The cases of sexual abuse against children in the Catholic Church are particularly egregious because of the continual and concerted effort to cover them up. Banville's 2020 novel *Snow* turns around this theme. It is the story of the murder of a priest. He was murdered, it is eventually revealed, by a former victim of the child sexual abuse he perpetrated throughout his life, thanks to his position of power. His body is found, and it appears that he has fallen (note the appearance again of the 'Fall') down the stairs. On closer inspection, however, he has been castrated, and his testicles are found in a smashed whiskey glass. A detective, Strafford, is sent to investigate the case.

The reason I particularly mention *Snow* is because of the similarities it has to *The Broken Jug*. It is the story of sexual abuse of power and the establishment's attempt to cover it up to save itself. It centres on the destruction of icons. The priest's uniform is an icon or representation of his supposed godliness and superiority. Regardless of his own personal actions or personality, this representation causes people to assume, based on previous perception, that he is trustworthy and not culpable. This perception is strong enough to continue even when his/the priesthood's actions suggest otherwise. Since he wears his icon, the way to break what it represents is to break him i.e. kill him.

The more striking similarity to *The Broken Jug* is the importance of the icon of the whiskey glass, which is smashed during the murder. Alcohol, especially whiskey, is mentioned repeatedly within the novel. Characters typically offer each other alcohol upon meeting, and it is highlighted that the detective Strafford does not like alcohol and only drinks it out of convention. To Strafford, a character remarks: 'You used to drink Daddy's whiskey.' When Strafford responds: 'Only out of politeness', his conversation partner says: 'Yes, you were always polite.' This exchange reflects the fact that Strafford was willing to deny the truth in order to fit social convention and "politeness": scared off by the Catholic Church, he does not reveal the truth of what occurred.

The smashed glass in *Snow* may therefore be understood not just as a representation of destroyed virtue or innocence, but also of the cycle of abuse, as abused goes on to abuse, violator goes on to violate.

The title, *Snow*, is also relevant to Kleist's *Der zerbrochne Krug*. In *Der zerbrochne Krug*, the snow means that Adam's culpability is proven, when the perpetrator's footprints in the snow lead to his door. In *Snow*, rather than revealing the

crime, so much snow has fallen that it covers the murderer's tracks. I would argue that these are all deliberate references and subversions of Kleist's source text.

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I wish to turn here to a brief discussion of another portrayal of crime in Banville's oeuvre: that is, the crimes committed by an individual. To the reader familiar with Kleist's Novelle 'Michael Kohlhaas', it is striking that Banville would choose to write substantial narratives inspired by extraordinary, real-life crimes with political consequences. Here I will discuss Banville's character Freddie Montgomery, from *The Book of Evidence* (1989), and how his crimes are related to the concept of identity.

The protagonist of Banville's *The Book of Evidence* was inspired by a contemporary Dublin criminal: Malcolm Macarthur, who committed a pair of murders that had political consequences in Ireland, in July 1982. Macarthur was initially not a famous man, but he had social links to the Attorney General Patrick Connolly, and was arrested at the latter's house, after having murdered two people. This resulted in the sacking of the Attorney General and since has led to allegations that Macarthur possessed compromising information on several leading politicians. There were several other extraordinary aspects of the murders and arrest. An ambulance escorted the murderer - who was driving the victim's car, with the dying victim inside - to a hospital, assuming the murderer was a doctor due to the fact that the victim, a nurse, displayed a medical badge in her car. Macarthur, while still undetected, attended a sports match as a VIP with senior members of the police. Macarthur himself called the police, while at large, to tell them not to bother investigating the murders, using his own name. The entire trial and sentencing lasted less than ten minutes. The unusual

aspects of the crime made the story a major scandal and led the Taoiseach at the time to label the case as 'grotesque', 'unbelievable', 'bizarre' and 'unprecedented'. This phrasing became the acronym 'GUBU', since used to describe similarly odd events, especially in the context of Irish journalism.

The brazenness and bizarreness of Macarthur and his crime is reflected in Banville's Freddie Montgomery, the protagonist of the Frames Trilogy. Freddie commits his own, seemingly inexplicable crime: he steals a painting from the stately home of a family friend and kidnaps the maid who apprehends him, in full sight of a group of tourists who are visiting the house. After ten days he is identified and arrested, and the novel takes the form of the testimony he would give to the judge, an account of the crime and his experience of prison, as well as his life beforehand. The similarity in plot to the GUBU case is clear.

The writing is self-referential. It takes the form of Freddie's prepared testimony to the court, and Banville makes this explicit on numerous occasions, from the very first sentence: 'My Lord, when you ask me to tell the court in my own words, this is what I shall say'. 'Clerk, strike that last sentence, it will seem to mean too much'. Moreover, the text is not only self-conscious but tries to alter itself as it is written, looks back on itself and looks ahead to itself: 'this is what *I shall* say'; 'strike *that last sentence'* emphases mine). The crime itself, in the text, becomes an art object, as has 'GUBU' in its own way.

According to McMinn, Banville presents Freddie in such a way as 'to acknowledge his depravity in a style which forces us to consider an aesthetic rather than a moral assessment of that depravity' (103). Consider Freddie's comment that 'even I was not ruffian enough for such effrontery' (80) 'I felt it would be in bad taste'

(81). Freddie does have certain criteria for the limits to how he will act, and these are aesthetic.

A Raskolnikov-like figure, Freddie seems to understand, even before committing the crime, that it will differentiate him from the rest of humanity. He is a very self-conscious criminal. He is deeply preoccupied with his identity as a transgressor. The very first thing we learn about Freddie and the first thing he tells us about himself is how his public audience perceives him in the cage (5), and also how he is artificially creating a narrative for the judge (5). He only watches the television if it is about his trial (6). This suggests that for Freddie, crime is not about right or wrong, nor about the victim: it is about the perpetrator's identity.

The time when Freddie feels most alive is when he is on the run, waiting to be rumbled, to be '*unmasked*' (Banville 137:emphasis my own). He wants to feel the heavy hand of the law on them; he is eager for it. Perhaps then the main concern here is not one of imprisonment, but that of escape, a liminal space between usual life and prison. The existence of a liminal space, outside of society, suggests the possibility of moving into a world in which it is possible to be complete, and authentic.

We can see the transgression of social order as an attempt to commit an identity- and authenticity-affirming act. We might interpret Kohlhaas' final action before his execution in this light. Critics have argued about the motivations behind the story's ending, in which Kohlhaas revenges himself by means of swallowing the paper prophecy so desired by his enemy. While Kohlhaas' previous criminal actions seem, to some extent, by his righteous motivations to achieve justice, the swallowing of the capsule goes against this characterisation. I would suggest that if we interpret 'Michael Kohlhaas' in a Banvillean light, we can see this final act of revenge as Kohlhaas'

identity-affirming crime. Throughout his life Kohlhaas obeyed the social order, and yet

he was not served justice. Kohlhaas' experience proves that the system is broken, even

for the law-abiding. By the text's end, it is not surprising therefore that Kohlhaas might

turn away from his moral code to transgress against his social duty to his common man,

and act out of pure revenge, as a final way to establish himself outside of the faulty

system.

5. KLEIST AND CONSTANTINE'S WIDER OEUVRE

The case for Kleist's presence in Constantine's wider oeuvre is not as straightforward as for that of Banville. In the latter's case, any supposed line between what constitutes a target text and what constitutes an "original" Banville text is entirely blurred, and is easily seen as a spectrum, with explicit and implicit references to Kleist, as well as other authors, abundant. Hence, whilst the investigation of Kleist's presence within Banville's wider oeuvre may be far from simple, the mere fact of the existence of this presence within the wider oeuvre is ultimately indisputable. In Constantine's case, the line could, at first glance, be said to be more definitive. Constantine's Kleist translations are clearly labelled as such, and whilst Constantine's writing does frequently reference other authors, sometimes making this explicit in paratextual material, Kleist is not immediately apparent among them. It might be tempting, then, for the casual observer, to describe Constantine's oeuvre as consisting of two discrete sections: "obviously a Kleist translation" and "obviously nothing to do with Kleist", with the implication that hunting for Kleist outside of the former category would be a meaningless endeavour.

What might seem to present something of an investigatory dead-end, is, I would argue, quite the opposite. This particular line of enquiry is in fact especially interesting in Constantine's case, given the following: first, that my analysis of Constantine will ultimately conclude that translation is a fundamental part of his motivation for, and style of writing, thus making every text in the network of texts Constantine has encountered significant; secondly, precisely because of the fact that it is more challenging and therefore has perhaps greater potential to affect our thinking in terms

of broader questions regarding influence, legacy, and the supposed boundaries of source/target material. It is apparent from his response to my questions in interview that, as far as he can recall, Constantine was not thinking specifically and deliberately of creating a Kleist target text when devising the following works, with one exception. As long as this fact is acknowledged, I see no reason to discount analysing a Kleist story as the source *material* for a Constantine story, with the benefit here that the choice of authors is, of course, by no means arbitrary. We know that Constantine is deeply familiar with Kleist. My aim is to map out a segment of the network of texts in which Constantine's oeuvre intersects with Kleist, and it is my firm belief that this network does not consist solely of the *Selected Writings*.

In the following analyses of Constantine's novels and short stories I will identify the following wide-ranging aspects of Constantine's writing: the use of structural emblems and the portrayal of sexual disassociation and repressed knowledge. I will explicate the ways in which these concerns might have developed through Constantine's engagement with Kleist. Whilst these topics would seem to be quite disparate, I will argue that at the base of these instances Constantine is playing with ideas around paradox and contradiction that make the world, as he portrays it in his writing, very Kleistian. This chapter will, therefore, not only contribute analysis of texts thus far neglected by scholars, but also provide greater insight into Constantine's interactions with Kleist, as well as evidence of Kleist's presence on today's anglophone literary scene.

Structural emblems: 'An Island', 'Under the Dam', 'The Cave' and 'In Another Country'

Emblems recur throughout Kleist's oeuvre. In *Michael Kohlhaas*, the two horses that spark the conflict between the eponymous protagonist and the local nobility function as an emblem of Kohlhaas' pursuit of justice. While the horses are initially 'wohlgenährt alle und glänzend', Kohlhaas' violent desire for recompense is lit when the Junker tries to return them emaciated, and it is a symbol of Kohlhaas' success, despite his execution, when they are returned to him 'von Wohlsein glänzen[d]'. The broken jug of *Der zerbrochne Krug* symbolises the perceived loss of virginity of Eve, as well as the "Fall" of Adam and the destruction of the cultural imagery revered by the community (see Schneider 2000:508). In both *Die Familie Schroffenstein* and *Penthesilea*, Kleist uses the emblem of the healthy oak, whose very strength causes it to fall in a storm which the dead oak is able to weather. Further examples, which will be discussed in this chapter, appear in Kleist's letters.

Constantine shares with Kleist the 'eye for emblems' he rightly attributes to the German writer (2004:xviii). The use of a concrete image to illustrate the abstract is a key element of Constantine's writing, and one that has strong resonances not only with Kleist's writing, but, crucially, with Constantine's understanding of Kleist's writing. The frequency and consistency with which Constantine uses concrete images, rather than abstract language, has been noted - and sometimes presented as a source of criticism - by reviewers. Harris states that 'what might be thought a weakness in Constantine's poetic language, [is] its incapacity for abstraction [...]. Weaker poems […] rely on a procedure that is merely additive (of new imagery, mainly)' (1990:58); Dugdale outlines a 'memorable' example of Constantine's style with the example of a poem that contains 'thousands of brand new, strange and shocking images of

civilisation' (2005:89). Analysis of several of Constantine's short stories, through the lens of Kleist, can shed light on how these images, or emblems, function as a fundamental part of Constantine's writing, generating tension and paradox, and formally reflecting the relationships and events within the works. This is especially the case with regards to emblems that refer to structures - an arch, a glacier, a dam, a shieling - and I will argue that this constitutes textual evidence that Kleist has had a profound impact on Constantine's style.

'An Island'

Across Constantine's wider oeuvre, what I would consider to be the only indisputably intentional reference to Kleist is in the short story 'An Island'. First published in 2012 in the collection *'Tea at the Midland' and other stories*, 'An Island' is an epistolary story. It takes the form of a collection of first-person letters, all written, we assume, by one male writer, over the course of roughly three months, and addressed to one person (presumed female), who never responds. The form is reminiscent of eighteenth-century epistolary novels - Goethe's *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers*; Hölderlin's *Hyperion* - and also of the lives of eighteenth-century writers themselves, with Rousseau's time on St Peter's Island on Lake Biel, and Kleist's period spent on the Aarinsel, as historical examples. The letters of 'An Island' detail the writer's life after he has moved to live alone on the island, and contain passages of self-reflection, details of his new relationships with the island's inhabitants, and descriptions of the natural landscape of the island and its prehistoric burial structures. In the concluding entries the text implies that the narrator will shortly commit suicide.

As a reader of Kleist, and as a reader of Constantine on Kleist, I was struck by

the following passage in the story, which I quote at length, in its entirety (60-1):

17 December

I witnessed a thing last week you might have liked. There's a spit of pebbles at
the south end covered at high water but running out to a lichened castle of rocks
that stinks of birds, grows a rank verdure and is never covered. I came over the
hill, one of the pocked-and-blistered-with-burials small hills, and saw a man out
there on that low-water rope of stone and he was busy building. I got off the
skyline quick, to watch. I was in the dead bracken, blotted out of view, like a
hunter, watching him. About midway, where it would be covered a fathom
deep, he was building an arch. I watched two hours, wrapped in Mary's father's
army greatcoat, while the man exposed and utterly intent worked at his arch. I
saw that to get the thing to stand he must build inside it also as it grew,
supporting it all the way and especially, of course, where the curves, the desire
of either side to meet in a keystone on thin air, began. He, by his cleverness,
aided those pillars in their wish to curve, become the makings of an arch and
meet. How he worked! — with tact, with care, with nous and cognizance of
what any stone of a certain size and weight and shape could do and couldn't do.
And when it was made and the arch was fitted around and relying on the merely
serving wall of stones, I prayed a prayer such as I hardly ever prayed in all my
time with the monks, that his keystone would hold and the two half-arches, so
needing one another, so incapable of any life without, would by their meeting
and their obedience to gravity (their suicidal wish to fall) over the void would
hold when one by one he took his servant necessary stones away. It held: stone
rainbow on its own two heavy feet, because the halves of its bodily curve had
met and all desire to fall became the will to last miraculously for ever. The man,
the builder-man, stood back and contemplated it and nodded. Walked all round
it, pausing, viewing it from every angle, nodded again, glanced at his watch
(acknowledging he would die) then set off fast from the spit of pebbles to the
path, I suppose to catch a boat. And I crept down from hiding to have a close
look at his work.

The tide, far out, had turned. I came back later and watched by starlight till the
waves, washing in from either side, had entered under the arch and it stood in
them. Any big sea would have toppled it but that was a quiet night, the ripples
worked as the man had, little by little, very gradually and as it were
considerately turning air to water. I watched his work disappear. Back in my
bed I thought of the two curves meeting, the keystone weighing them secure,
the water flowing and swirling through and over and all around. And I got up
early, before it was light, and found my way down there again, past the Pool
with its lapping and its queer aquatic voices, past the hotel with its anxious
manager, to see the stranger's arch, whether it still stood. And it did! It had
withstood the reflux and stood there draggled with green weed under the
flickering beginnings of an almost lightless day.

> The arch survived two more tides, then the sea got rough and when I went next there was a heap of stones and only its maker or a witness of its making would believe that such a thing had ever been.

The arch image comes from Kleist's letter to Wilhelmine von Zenge of 16th November 1800:

> Ich gieng an jenem Abend vor dem wichtigsten Tage meines Lebens in Würzburg spatzieren. Als die Sonne herabsank war es mir als ob mein Glück untergienge. Mich schauerte wenn ich dachte, daß ich vielleicht von Allem scheiden müßte, von Allem, was mir theuer ist. Da gieng ich, in mich gekehrt, durch das gewölbte Thor, sinnend zurück in die Stadt. Warum, dachte ich, sinkt wohl das Gewölbe nicht ein, da es doch keine Stütze hat? Es steht, antwortete ich, weil alle Steine auf einmal einstürzen wollen – u. ich zog aus diesem Gedanken einen unbeschreiblich erquickenden Trost, der mir bis zu dem entscheidenden Augenblicke immer mit der Hoffnung zur Seite stand, daß auch ich mich halten würde, wenn Alles mich sinken läßt.
>
> Das, mein liebes Minchen, würde mir kein Buch gesagt haben und das nenne ich recht eigentlich lernen von der Natur (2013:593)

As clear as Constantine's reference is for a reader familiar with Kleist's anecdotes, there is no explicit mention of Kleist in this story, in either the text or in any paratextual material (the latter is present in Constantine's books with regard to other authors, when in the front matter of his collections he notes the sources of some quotations). In fact, when asked about 'An Island' in interview, Constantine attributes its inspiration to *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* (Constantine in interview with Tobias Carroll, 2015).

It is nevertheless evident that the similarity with Kleist is no coincidence, particularly because, although the arch letter is not included in Constantine's translations, it is presented as an emblem in his introduction to the *Selected Writings* (xxi):

> Kleist suddenly noticed - in Würzburg - that an arch is held in place because all of its constituent stones are striving to collapse. He drew a little diagram and sent it to Wilhemine. Lives hold together in Kleist's world by the tension of their destructive forces. Often in his plays and stories the keystone of the arch of a person's life is removed.

It is noteworthy that this is one of only two emblems that Constantine mentions in this introduction, which is itself only ten pages long. Constantine does not have much space with which to introduce Kleist to his readers. Clearly Constantine finds this an important image of Kleist's for himself and for the readers of his translations, and Constantine later confirmed in my interview with him that the instance in 'An Island' was indeed an intentional reference to Kleist.

Before discussing the relevance of the arch emblem to the themes of 'An Island' as a whole, it is fruitful to analyse the passage in detail. The first-person narrator of 'An Island' - the letter-writer - introduces the arch image as particularly worthy of attention for the recipient of his letters ('I witnessed a thing last week you might have liked'), in much the same way that Kleist deliberately selected this image to relate to Wilhemine. Various elements of the arch passage from 'An Island' are stylistically striking and mark it out as an image intended to catch the reader's attention. The syntax is somewhat labyrinthine, making the reader work to grasp its meaning. The extended attribute 'pocked-and-blistered-with-burials small hills' is a construction much more common to German than English, and stands out within the story. Constantine's two insertions in parentheses '(their suicidal wish to fall)' and '(acknowledging he would die)' are unusual within the story, in which parenthetical asides are not a typical feature. Mirroring each other, almost as two half-arches that imply the arch structure and the builder are twins, the parentheses foreshadow the death of both the arch and the builder, as well as the letter-writer's suicide at the end of the story. Within the formal structure of the text they act as keystones, structurally separated from the main text, surrounded on the page by the curves of the parentheses, but here the keystones, as interpreted by the letter-writer, bring only the wish or acknowledgement of death. That

this acknowledgement is attributed by the narrator to the builder is especially unexpected, since it seems to come from nowhere. The narrator elsewhere characterises himself as 'a shade already in the underworld' (57) - this has echoes of another Constantine story ('The Loss') where a protagonist claims his soul has died without his body dying. The half-arches are imbued with life and will by the narrator - 'life', 'will to fall', 'desire to last', 'survived', 'bodily curve', 'feet'; thus cementing the idea that they are linked to, or representative of, a human life. Crucially, the entire endeavour is stressed as one eliciting physical effort and skill on the builder's (maker's) part. It is surrounded with religious language: the narrator's 'prayer', language regarding a 'maker' and witnessing, and the miracle needed for the arch to last. The metaphor of the arch as a rainbow links the arch to Christian tradition, in which the rainbow is a sign from God of his promise never again to destroy the earth by flood. After a brief pause lasting a few tides, the sea floods the arch and destroys it. The sound, manmade structure, held together by natural forces, is destroyed by natural forces.

To understand the implications of the arch image within the story, it is important to analyse how this image of the stability of a structure is related to the stability of human society and of an individual person. Throughout the story the narrative is laced with language of structure; of that structure having some sort of life; and of an inevitable breaking and collapse. A bonfire structure on the beach is overwhelmed by the waves after its 'life'. The narrator lives in a shed, a habitation that is defined by the bare bones of its structure and that exists precariously and yet more organically within the natural world than a house. Even the narrator's casual job on the island is to redecorate walls and maintain hedges (57), suggesting that these structures need continual attention and rebuilding in order to stay intact. As in the arch passage,

structural language and biological, emotional or philosophical language is intertwined continually throughout the narrative: 'My stock of resources against disintegration'(50); the flames of the bonfire can 'live' (50); 'you look threadbare [...] breaking up'; 'the skeletal shape of the tomb' (72); 'I assemble all the arguments against me' (84); 'I thought very *brokenly* of you. Or, to be more exact, very *breakingly* - you were breaking [...] and back came the worry that everything I ever held true will crumble, perish, and turn to dust from within [...] the power to uphold any faith and hope and love will erode, perhaps very quickly the way a cliff might collapse that was riddled through and through and nobody had known' (49-50). Ironically, the structures that have stood the test of time and have any sense of permanence are the 'tumuli', ancient burial structures, on the island, with the connotations of death and tumult that the word suggests. The society of the island is also presented as long-standing but nevertheless fragile, with a potential to collapse: 'the chief impression you get is one of instability' (51). It is a system that reflects the arch emblem, since the native population tends to exclude newcomers who intend to settle there, yet at the same time relies on these newcomers to support the economy and establish new branches of the family tree. In this continuous process the natives often pay the price of newcomers leaving and taking the natives with them. Hence the island's population is at once maintained by, and destroyed by outside forces.

How does the arch image map onto the narrator's own life? For the narrator cultivating a belief in God has been his attempt at finding a keystone for his life. The reader is not given much information regarding his mysterious past with the monks, but the result of this time is clear: 'Being with the monks soon killed even my desire to believe in God' (70). Constantine does not shy away from adding further sources of

criticism of religion, introducing a character who was raised by the Christian Brothers and who 'did pretty well to survive all that' (62). What the narrator does value from the monks is the space and quiet to reflect, and the culmination of a continued search for this is the island itself, an isolated space away from the rest of the world. The story begins - like 'Words To Say It', another Constantine story that I will analyse later in this chapter - with the narrator on a boat, travelling to the island and surrounded by people looking for animals, in this instance birdwatchers 'taken up in a sort of rapture' looking for rare birds (45). This is a recurring image in Constantine, and a key intertext in this regard is his well-known 1983 poem 'Watching for Dolphins', in which travellers on a boat are desperate to spot dolphins, an event which, if it occurred, would amount to an 'epiphany'. Hence, as we have already seen in the previous ST-TT comparison chapter, it is not that Constantine rejects Christian or religious language, but rather that he employs this same language as a way to enter into a space of higher-level contemplation. In 'An Island' the narrator, already disenchanted by life, only 'loiter[s] on the fringes' of the rapturous birdwatchers, but by setting up the story in this way Constantine establishes a common feature of humanity, that is the seeking of some sort of spiritual or existential revelation physicalised in the attempt to spot a rare wild animal, as the starting point of his story. I would argue that Constantine's use of the arch image runs parallel to his frequently used animal-watching image, with the effort to hold up the falling, suicidal arches of one's own life mirroring the single-minded, desperate lookout for the animals. For the narrator the islands themselves appear to hold the promise of epiphany. He comments, as he 'watch[es] them materialise in their own domain of light': 'it seems to me a quite peculiar blessing that a place so manifestly different, far away, out on the borders, could be approached by me' (46).

The island is the same type of structure that the narrator did value in his time with the monks: 'I went in the church today [...] Every now and then I remember [...] why I was ever with the monks. Four solid walls containing stillness [...] the possibility of being quiet and receiving some illumination' (48). There is an implication that such a space is the last place the narrator can hope to receive epiphany, to assemble the destructive forces of life into a keystone and an arch that will hold, or, alternatively, a suitable setting for the final admission that such a keystone, at least for the narrator, does not exist.

That a dogmatic adherence to Christianity alone, or a belief in a literal God, will not suffice, or is even irrelevant, is apparent. As is common throughout Constantine's oeuvre, it is only during the passages featuring an amalgamation of Christian and classical imagery that epiphany sometimes seems possible, or even near. I demonstrated earlier in this thesis Constantine's interest in combining the myths from Christianity and from the classical world, sharing with Kleist a common interest in this regard. This is an aspect of Constantine's work that has frequently been noted, as in the following interview:

> Oxford Poetry: Often myths from the New Testament and from Classical Greece are pitted against each other in a single poem [...]. To what extent do these two systems of belief inform your poetry?

> Constantine: Agape and Eros: I want both. Also, since I believe this world is all we've got, the stories I like best are those which are concrete, tangible and earthly. But I must emphasize that in writing poems I am not putting together an ideological system .... I am, though, attracted to the energy of Greece as opposed to the charity and compassion of Christianity.

Constantine marries several opposing concepts here: the stories he likes best are concrete, yet they are being used to explore abstract notions such as Agape and Eros, energy, charity and compassion. It is interesting that this is framed by the interviewer as

the two systems being 'pitted against' one another. Constantine refers to the energy of Greece 'as opposed to' Christianity: this, I would argue, is not intended to imply that the two systems do not or cannot coexist. On the contrary, it seems clear to me that in, and by means of, his writing Constantine takes what he finds honest and beautiful from both systems to reach towards an understanding of the world as we perceive it. While the institutions of power and abuse that have developed from these systems are subject to bitter criticism by Constantine, the imagery and mythology that derives from them seems, for Constantine, to come close to telling the truth of the human experience and enabling the writer and the reader to navigate life.

'An Island' bears out this conviction. The narrator seems closest to finding a keystone for his life in passages where classical and Christian images abound. This is evident in the letter entry describing the Christmas party, and the outing to the mudflats that follows soon after it. The most vivid element of the Christmas party scene is the account of the narrator's conversations with the two young women who are his coworkers on the island. Characterised almost as maenads, their beauty is conveyed in a sudden glut of bright compound colours and precious stones ('pale jade', 'lapis-lazuli', 'dark blue', 'blue-green') and description of their 'beauty and gaiety' and 'youthfulness and beauty', their physical intimacy with each other, their 'aura', 'the scent in their hair', 'all the gaiety' (68), their 'eyes and smiles, dresses and stones of the sea', 'their youth and gaiety and delight in themselves', 'their careless good nature', and 'the laughter in them' (69). Such an overwhelming profusion of warm and luminous language in a narrative that is chiefly one of harsh winds and a beautiful but menacing sea makes the girls almost into symbols of their own. This effect is emphasised by the narrator's desire to summon up 'a syrtaki from Ithaca or

Samothrace' for them (69), with this classical Mediterranean language evoking the vital

energy that Constantine attributes to classical antiquity. A few letter entries later the

narrator describes how he and the young women go out together onto the mudflats. The

narrator watches for birds and succeeds in seeing some rare ones, admiring their 'grace

and menace' (79) - this harks back to the opening birdwatching and coincides with his

admiring of the young women, 'as strange to [him] as selkies' (80) and calling to him

in a bird-like 'not-human' cry (79). 'I never knew such proximity of life', he says, as

Constantine combines these reflections with overtly Christian language of 'the

solemnity of [the] bread and fish and wine' (80), and earlier reminiscing that the 'lights

and colours' shining through the windows of a local church remind him of the women's

clothes, necklaces and bracelets (70).

In both these scenes, Christian, classical and sensual language combine to jolt

the narrator, and the reader, largely out of everyday life and to suggest that the narrator

is at least near the space in which an epiphany of some sort might happen. A possible

reference to Kleist's essay 'Über das Marionettentheater' further supports this

suggestion. Reflecting on the Christmas party, the narrator muses that he might have

entered the realm represented by the girls if only he could have 'danced the lumbering

graceless dance of my leaden soul [...] ugly bear of a soul, dancing, until I was

changed' (69). The language of grace, dance, and weight, as well as the motif of the

dancing bear, is shared between the two texts. The essay combines Christian and

classical imagery (the Fall, classical art) to discuss consciousness and natural grace. As

translated in the *Selected Writings*, Kleist writes that 'heaviness of matter' is 'the factor

that most works against the dancer' (414). The epiphany the narrator seeks can in this

light be understood as the singular 'centre of gravity' of Kleist's marionette. He seems

to want to undergo a transformation that is the reverse of that of the youth who resembles the statue in Kleist's essay. It is important to remember, however, that the world that the women represent for the narrator only exists insofar as it is perceived by the narrator himself. If we follow the line of thinking in Kleist's essay, this state of grace exists for no human being. Perhaps, then, we might surmise that one of the chief tragedies of Constantine's short story is that the narrator feels that he alone cannot access a hallowed state of being and society that is, in reality, barred to everyone.

These virtuosic descriptions remind us that the narrator is a writer. The very fabric of the story is his writing - the letters, and the occasionally mentioned notebooks - and he thinks and writes markedly in imagery and metaphor. Constantine's narrator draws attention to the effort and mechanism of writing, of this way of seeing and ordering the world, in the same way as he draws attention to, and praises, the physical efforts of the making of the arch. In the narrator's final letter there appears the following passage, in which the 'making [of] clear sentences' is presented as an effort to revolt against outwardly and inwardly imposed destructive forces (86):

> So I have lived in poverty knowing all the while that life is rich, rich. And I have lived in obedience. I obeyed the orders that would harm me. Early on it was God and the monks and when I was shot of them I devised in myself ever crueller, yet more nonsensical and in the end even madder dictators. So I lived in obedience to temptations and commands whose one purpose was to kill the life in me. Now and again I was disobedient, I answered back, I said no, joyously I transgressed. For a while I was a passable imitation of a man claiming his right to live. But I always came to heel in the end, knuckled under, took the punishment for my revolt. In my notebooks I wrote all this - the mechanics of it. I did once think that if I could describe it very precisely I could fight it better. That was a mistake. I never understood why I was like I was, but I did see very clearly how I was, how it worked in me, the mechanism that sided with death against my life. I knew I didn't understand why but I hoped that if I saw how it worked, I might escape. Must one know why? Should it not be enough to see how? Well it wasn't enough. The best I ever got from writing it all down was the bleak satisfaction of making clear sentences.

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Making and creating does not always have a positive effect on the maker. The following passage demonstrates the paradoxically active and yet involuntary way that the narrator, so he conceives, almost physically creates his own misery:

> I undo all the good I did or that was done to me during the day. Every elation, I deflate. Every kindness, I convert to dust. Every insight, joy in a thing, hope of more such things, I worry soon to death. Truly, I can summon up a face that smiles at me and in whose eyes I see myself a welcome friend and I can turn that face and smile to deceit and mockery at once. Then I assemble all the arguments against me. I accumulate the proof that I'm not fit to live.

The similarity to Kleist's letter from the Aarinsel is patent:

> Ich würde ganz ohne alle widrigen Gefühle sein, wenn ich nicht, durch mein ganzes Leben daran gewöhnt, sie mir selbst erschaffen müßte. (Auf der Aarinsel bei Thun, den 1. Mai 1802)

In Constantine's own translation, from the *Selected Writings*:

> I should be quite without any unpleasant feelings were I not, after a lifetime's habit, compelled to create them myself. (423)

It should be noted that 'erschaffen' has the force of creating something new - it could typically be used regarding God creating life/the world; that the prefix 'er-' emphasis is both a result and the process of achieving that result; and that the etymological root of 'schaffen' means 'to shape', 'to cut' or 'to make'. Constantine highlights, in his introduction to the *Selected Writings*, the language which Kleist uses in his letters when discussing his *Lebensplan*: 'When [Kleist] advocates self-improvement he uses a naively concrete imagery of collecting, constructing, building [...] as though a satisfactory life could be pieced together' (xxi-xxii). Constantine has clearly taken inspiration from Kleist in this regard, not only by describing both human experience and writing with the language of making, but also by portraying the effort of the making as that which, paradoxically, brings despair. The narrator conceives of his urge to write as an interpretive keystone that could support him against that which tries to

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kill the life in him, and yet acknowledges that through creative efforts of interpretation he actively brings himself closer and closer to death.

Indeed, the simultaneously quiet and violent despair of the story's ending makes it clear that none of these approaches - Christianity, the vitality of the classical world, women, nature, writing - has succeeded in keeping the arch of the narrator's life standing. Descriptions of the liveliness of the women are accompanied by the narrator's reiteration that he is glimpsing a world in which he feels he cannot participate: e.g. 'the life in them, beyond what I could bear to contemplate' (68). Interesting in this regard is the fact that the narrator attributes a second structure to the builder of the arch, a decorative outline, made out of pebbles, of one of the tumuli. In its curved form it reminds us of the arch, but it surrounds a kist, laid out in pebbles 'the way you might lay out a necklace on a surface, to see what shapes it was capable of when not determined by a woman's neck or throat'. The necklace, previously associated with the beauty, vivacity and sensuality of the young women, now becomes associated with death as the narrator contemplates 'a peculiar definiteness, like finality' and the 'sky [...] as bleached as bone [...] and pitiless and uninhabitable' (71). It is no coincidence, I would argue, that the curve of a necklace is aesthetically similar to the curve of an arch.

Finally, the writing, the necklace, the effort and the narrator's life all give way to the sea. 'Forgive me, I changed my mind. I've thrown my mother's necklace into the sea and fed my notebooks and your photograph into the hotel's incinerator [...] *Please* burn the rest [of the letters] unread. They were my effort and it failed' (87). In these words, which begin the final letter of the text, Constantine combines the necklace, the sea, writing and the effort of writing. Like Constantine's arch emblem, the narrator is

overwhelmed both from his own inner desire to fall and from outer forces that have suppressed him.

Arches, islands, cliffs on the point of collapsing, pebbles surrounding a grave, necklaces: these structural images are linked in 'An Island', and all are inextricably tied to the narrator's own frame of mind and conception of being, one of having 'lived in obedience to temptations and commands whose one purpose was to kill the life in me'. 'An Island', I would argue, is fundamentally built on, and around, Kleist's arch image. Much like Kleist's letter, the state of mind of the protagonist, and his response to the human condition, is reflected in a structural emblem, and the concrete, physical objects of the world within the story are like outward representations of its more abstract features.

The specific arch emblem does not, as far as I can tell, appear in Constantine's works again, and this was at least superficially confirmed to me by Constantine in his interview, when he, albeit when put on the spot, could not think of any other specific occasions on which he has deliberately and directly referenced Kleist. This thread of investigation does not end here, however. The arch image does in fact have wider-reaching ramifications in the abundance of such structural images in some of Constantine's best-known stories - a cave, in 'The Cave'; a dam, in 'Under the Dam'; and a glacier in 'In Another Country' - and it is this group of stories that I will discuss in the following analysis.

'In Another Country'

Arguably Constantine's best-known image, and the basis of the story that was made into the award-winning and Oscar-nominated film *45 Years*, is that of a glacier. 'In

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Another Country' was first published in *The Reader* in 2001. The story, only a few pages in length, narrates a week in the life of a long-married retired couple, Mr and Mrs Mercer. Their quiet relationship is thrown into quiet turmoil by the news that the body of the husband's former lover, Katya, has been discovered. When Mr Mercer was a young man, and Katya a twenty-year-old woman, they undertook a journey together to Italy, escaping on foot from Bavaria. While the couple were hiking over the Alps, Katya fell to her death from the path into the glacier far below, and was lost from sight. Now, after five decades have passed, the snow on top of the glacier has thawed and exposed to view her body, perfectly preserved in the ice, and still in appearance that of a young woman. The narrative begins as Mr Mercer, who, at the time, was listed as Katya's next of kin, receives a letter informing him of this, and is overwhelmed with a desperate longing for the past.

The tension in the narrative arises, chiefly, I argue, from two related sources: first, from the strain that this event puts on the couple's relationship - with Mr Mercer consumed by digging out physical artefacts as memories of the past, and eventually deciding to travel to identify the body, and Mrs Mercer consumed by the thought of the eternally young presence of her husband's former lover; and secondly, from the paradoxical nature of the image of the glacier itself, and the way in which this reflects the plot. It is regarding this second aspect of the text that I will relate the use of a structural emblem with that of Kleist's arch. Additionally, by means of the glacier, Constantine creates a situation in which the concept of the Doppelgänger fulfills a role similar to that in Kleist's *Amphitryon*.

Both Kleist's arch and Constantine's glacier are paradoxical structures that are simultaneously characterised by stasis and movement. By definition, a glacier is frozen,

static water, yet also by definition it is a river that moves. Ice's tendency is to melt, to collapse and release its contents, but the sheer mass of the ice itself is what keeps the glacier frozen and intact. Katya's body has always been within, inevitably and imminently bringing destruction to the married couple's relationship, like the cliff that has always been riddled in 'An Island'. Thus fundamentally nothing has changed when Mr Mercer receives the letter: Katya's body has not even been released from the ice. It is now merely visible, but it has not even been seen by either Mr or Mrs Mercer. Yet somehow, despite the stasis of the situation, the knowledge of Katya's reappearance comes as a painful shock and wrenches the marriage. The implication, as I will argue below, is that the frozen ice merely serves as a pause, a respite similar to that which Theisen has identified with respect to Kleist's 'Das Erdbeben in Chili' (2003). In Kleist's text the arch that fortuitously protects Jeronimo during the earthquake mirrors the structure of the story, in which a brief pause in the violence during the middle act eventually recollapses into violence. Although it is superficially associated with Katya, I will argue that the glacier is symbolic of the time between the death of Katya and her reappearance, and, therefore, the glacier is in fact symbolic of Mr Mercer's marriage with Mrs Mercer, and of Mrs Mercer herself.

An added heightening of the tension is caused by the repeated fact that both Mr *and* Mrs Mercer were aware of her being there the whole time.

Like the snow gradually melting away from Katya's body, Constantine's narrative reveals its secrets gradually. The uncanny, gruesome nature of the image of Katya's youthful body preserved in the ice is compounded by a further turn of the screw. Katya was newly pregnant with Mr Mercer's baby at the time of her death. Icebound Katya and her baby are a physical manifestation of the past and the future

both existing in the present, and of an impossible possibility: the possibility inherent in young love and new life, what could have been, and, given their perfect preservation, what (it almost feels like) could still be, and the impossibility of any fulfilment of that possibility, due to the chance death. Thus Katya and the baby, via the mechanism of the glacier that makes it possible, are physical, concrete images of abstract concepts.

There is, in fact, one final turn of the screw, developed throughout the story but only fully realised in the narrative's penultimate paragraph. Over the course of the text small details emerge that associate Mrs Mercer with Katya, not only because of their parallel romantic relationships with Mr Mercer. We find out that the women were born on almost exactly the same date; and that Katya had black hair, like Mrs Mercer. We find out that Mr Mercer and Katya pretended to be married, even though they were not, to avoid judgement; thus, at least in some emotional sense, Mr Mercer has been "married" before his current marriage. Since the relationship was never intentionally terminated by either party, in some sense this "marriage" never truly ended, but was rather put on pause by means of the glacier. We discover that Katya was pregnant, and that Mr and Mrs Mercer have not had children - it is suggested that this was not a deliberate choice, but rather a source of regret for Mrs Mercer, and therefore this also suggests that Mrs Mercer was unable to have children. Having established Katya as a sort of parallel version of Mrs Mercer, Constantine delivers a final blow: in the short letter that Mr Mercer writes to his wife to inform her that he is leaving at that very moment to go to view the body, against his wife's wishes, we learn that his wife, who has so far only been referred to as Mrs Mercer, is named Kate. Thus the overlap between the two women is complete. The subtle implication is that, to both Kate and

Mr Mercer, an identical yet "better" version of Kate that has usurped her position in the relationship.

I see parallels here with Kleist's *Amphitryon*. Kate plays both the role of Amphitryon - ousted from the lover's affections and her own identity as spouse by a Doppelgänger - and Alkmene - thoroughly displaced in terms of what she believed about her marriage and her husband.

Mr Mercer's position could also be said to bear similarities to that of Alkmene, in that at no point was he seeking out a "better" version of his spouse - with a foetus attached - but now that one has appeared he is, in his own quiet way, not able to dismiss it. It throws him into a profound reevaluation of his life. The mirror of his life is disturbed. By the end of the text Mr Mercer thinks of himself and Katya as 'Mr and Mrs' and addresses Kate by her first name. It is noteworthy that this is an aspect of the relationship that is a particular sticking point for both Mr and Mrs Mercer: '[Mr Mercer said:] You had to say you were Mr and Mrs in those days. And wear a curtain ring. We never did, said Mrs Mercer. We didn't have to, did we, Mr Mercer said.' (26).

By means of the glacier, Katya has taken on advantages that might elevate her to the level of the Jupiter-Amphitryon: she is eternally young; for Mr Mercer she is fundamentally unreachable, despite his having once been able to be her lover; the many decades of time have passed, and thus, crucially, she reflects back to Mr Mercer his own youthful, potential, heedless identity. To deviate briefly from one author to the other, Banville explains his fascination with twins or Doppelgängers thus: 'For a long time I had the notion that I was the only one who imagined that I was a surviving twin, but apparently it's a fantasy of a great many people. It's obvious when you think about it, you feel incomplete. We're always looking for our other half, as Ovid [sic] says it's

the greatest explanation of sex I've ever come across. We're looking for that other person literally to lock with, to be one' (appendix A).

To return to the glacier, we can see that it is by nature a paradoxical object, used here to function as a non-divine mechanism by which to contrive a similar situation to *Amphitryon*.

I have argued that the glacier is the manifestation of a pause - representing the time between Mr Mercer's relationship with Katya and the present, it could also be said to represent Mr and Mrs Mercer's marriage. The icy, barren nature of the glacier is a cruel reflection of the unhappily childless state of their union; and Katya, who, along with the baby in her womb, will eventually emerge surrounded by the melting, life-giving water, is both a youthful and a destructive force that threatens to claim Mr Mercer for its own as if the intervening time had never happened. This is, at least, how Mrs Mercer, in the last access the reader gets to her thoughts, sees the situation:

> Then she wept to herself, for the unfairness. Surely to God it wasn't much to ask, that you get through to the end and looking back don't fill with horror and disappointment and hopeless wishful thinking? All she wanted was to be able to say it hasn't been nothing, it hasn't been a waste of time, the fifty years, that they amount to something, if not a child, a something made and grown between man and wife you could be proud of and nearly as substantial as a child. (31)

That she has thus far clearly tried, perhaps subconsciously, to reject this thought is demonstrated by the fact that she attempts to say that Mr Mercer never told her about Katya. This is implied through her own later words not to be true. She also imagines that Katya had blonde hair, unlike her own black hair, despite the fact that, again, Mr Mercer claims he already told her Katya had black hair like Kate. It is also implied that Mrs Mercer hid Mr Mercer's German-English dictionary from his time with Katya 'behind the pickles', an obviously inappropriate place for it, and that Mrs Mercer knows he has been looking for it for a while. This is handled by the both of them in a

typically veiled manner: '[Mr Mercer said:] You must have put it there. I suppose I must, she said' (24). The glacier is a structural emblem that, in its own melting and collapse (a process that is considerably sped up through global warming, which can be understood here as humanity's selfish impact on the world), symbolises the at least temporary collapse of a marriage, in much the same way as the arch symbolises the narrator's collapse in 'An Island'.

Mr Mercer begins to spend much of his time in the loft, especially during the night, an intimate time when a typical couple would be expected to be together in their marital bed. The attic is cold: this fact is repeated several times. The 'warmth of their living space' is drawn up into the freezing loft; the ladder is permanently down, blocking their way into the living room (30). The iciness of the loft becomes a physical manifestation of the glacier inside their house. Mr Mercer obsessively digs through the books and photos of his time with Katya. He spends the night in the loft with her photos, which he 'clutch[es] two-handed against his heart', 'gibbering' (29), in a scene reminiscent of Elvire's bodily worship of the veiled portrait of Colino in Kleist's 'Der Findling'. Photography, even more than portraiture, allows the modern lover a heightened access to the past: like the glacier, it perfectly preserves it.

Meanwhile, Mrs Mercer seems to understand that Mr Mercer is "joining" Katya on a symbolic level: while he is up in the loft one night she thinks: 'He'll break his neck. [...] He'll freeze to death' (28). What appears to be merely typical concern over the wellbeing of a spouse is also recognition of his alliance to Katya: Mrs Mercer is almost playacting in her mind that what happened to Katya will happen to Mr Mercer: a fall, freezing, death. This is, therefore, a symbolic expression of her jealousy that goes

beyond mere upset that his attention is devoted to Katya's memory. Mrs Mercer recognises that he is mirroring Katya in a significant way.

Due to the unexpected arrival of the youthful past and hopeful future in the present, Mr Mercer realises that the image of himself that Mrs Mercer reflects to him is one of 'an old man near the end' (27). Conversely, Katya reflects Mr Mercer's lost youth, tantalisingly close in the present. The language of mirrors is also used with Katya. The shining ice evokes the surface of a mirror. Constantine's language when describing Mr Mercer's thoughts about Katya's uncovering is subtly sensual - 'the chaste snow drawn off her' (24) - and contrasts to the infertile marriage of Mr and Mrs Mercer. The language that Constantine uses to describe Mr Mercer suggests that his actions are symbolically an attempt to be closer to Katya. As Mr Mercer looks at himself in the mirror while he shaves, he tries to dig out the spirit of his youth (24), to uncover it physically just as the snow that covered Katya is removed.

Thus the text is not only a narrative of Mrs Mercer destabilised in her identity; it is also Mr Mercer destabilised in his. Not only Mrs Mercer has a destructive Doppelgänger: Mr Mercer is effectively also competing with a younger, "better" version of himself. The situation brings death and destruction to Mr Mercer: the blood he draws while shaving foreshadows the gradual dissolving of his inner identity. Constantine repeats several iterations of the following idea: 'He had lapsed away again. His face was desolate and absent' (25). In the same letter that delivers the blow of Mrs Mercer's first name, Mr Mercer tells Kate in a postscript that he will visit the doctor on his return: 'I think I'll ask [the doctor] for something a bit stronger to quieten me down' (33). The irony inherent in the idea of appealing to a doctor to dim further one's spirit bears similarities to Alkmene's plea to Amphitryon/Jupiter before the revelation of the

latter's real identity: 'My soul/ Goes dark for ever if you enlighten me' (Constantine 1997:133).

It is testament to the ambiguity of the situation, as well as to the quality of Constantine's writing, that the reader can feel equally sympathetic to both positions at once.

What is particularly interesting when considering this story with regard to Kleist is the well-publicised fact that the story is based on a true story, a report Constantine heard of an old man who viewed the body of his father, who, as a young man, had fallen into a glacier seventy years earlier, with the bizarre result that the father appeared much younger than the son (Shute 2015). Whether or not Constantine's story constitutes what Theisen terms Kleist's '(fictional) factuality' (2003:99) is debatable. Constantine's story, based on this report, is indeed both factual and fictional, yet it does not read like a newspaper report. What is also noteworthy is the way in which the twists of the story are serialised, as Theisen sets out with regards to the twists of 'Die Verlobung in St Domingo', so that the reader is continually having his/her understanding of the situation shifted: first, that the body has emerged, and what it means; second, that Katya was pregnant; and third, that Mrs Mercer is also named Kate and that Mr Mercer goes to view the body against her wishes. Theisen says of Kleist's story: 'Serializing the turning point and forcing the "even though" of its narrative logic into paradox, Kleist's narrative no longer accounts for a novella. It is modeled on the news report, attesting to the fact that the contingency of the real has come to be expected' (2003:92). Although I am not arguing that Constantine's story follows this model exactly, I would argue that the story both follows its own kind of inevitable logic whilst also relying for its effect on events that rely on chance: the fall, and the

coincidences between the two women. The glacier, like the use of the arch emblem in Kleist's 'Das Erdbeben von Chili', works on multiple levels: it is a feature of the plot; it has a paradoxical symbolic meaning of its own; in its structure it mirrors the structure of the character's lives over time.

'The Cave' and 'Under the Dam'

Rather than provide extensive close readings of the following texts, I will briefly lay out the ways in which Constantine again visits the concept of the structural emblem, in order to give evidence of the extent to which this recurs throughout his oeuvre of short stories. In these cases, the structural emblem in question becomes an unconventional habitation. In 'Under the Dam' (2003), at the beginning of the story the couple lives happily under a viaduct. The arches are a symbol of hope for them - but ironically, they prefigure the dam - they are not solid, they tremble. Seth reads about the weight the viaduct's arches were originally designed to be able to bear, and notes the difference in the weight they are forced to bear today: 'wondering at the difference' and thinking of the 'oblivious' people who travel over it, implying that the viaduct is precarious and could easily collapse. He also reads about a man who committed suicide by hanging himself from the viaduct (177). Constantine repeats several times that looking up at the bottom of the arches, one cannot see the top, but only the stars; this theme is repeated when, seeing the artificial lake created by the dam, Constantine states that the bulk of the water 'exceeded comprehension, like a starry sky' (186). These images associate the viaduct with properties of Kleist's arch and the glacier, also foreshadowing the properties of the dam and Seth's suicide. The coal catastrophe is paradoxical in that an abundance of the 'fuel of life' brings death. The arches bear a weight that Seth knows they are not designed to bear - they stand, but he knows collapse is imminent.

In 'The Cave', the cave in which the lovers meet becomes a separate space for thought, one that is terrifying yet satisfying and attractive. They 'ste[p] off a public street into a quite different space and time' (41). The area of limestone of the cave is described as 'a zone he could set off for and come into, a country of rock' (43) - it is a space apart from the everyday, like the island. Writing, babbling unintelligible language, a space for different thought - these concepts are all very Constaninean and are all prompted, and encapsulated in, the cave itself.

In these cases, the structures hold despite a great mass of water pressing on them: in the better-known case of the glacier, the water is the structure itself, perhaps why this is Constantine's most iconic emblem.

The water in all the stories is also frequently related to language: babbling, flowing. Thus it is not only destruction or life that is released when the snow melts or the dam bursts: language bursts out too. I will investigate the withholding and release of language in Constantine's works in the following section.

Repressed knowledge and the (im)possibility of communication: Constantine's 'Words to Say It' and Kleist's 'Die Marquise von O'

The theme of loss of self and identity discussed throughout this thesis is a prominent feature of Constantine's short story 'Words to Say It', published in the 2009 collection *The Shieling*. In this text Constantine creates a narrative in which disassociation and the impossibility of communication are explored in a way that is strikingly reminiscent of 'Die Marquise von O' on the levels of plot, theme, and language. Constantine's text is a development of the Actaeon myth, in which a man happens to come across a naked woman, and the narrative centres on the ramifications of this encounter. While the myth serves as the most obvious (and implicitly referenced) hypotext, I would argue that in

introducing the concept of marriage as a social remedy for a personal and professional failing, as well as intensely developing the theme of repressed knowledge and communication, Constantine's story takes inspiration from Kleist's novella.

Plot-level connections between 'Words to Say It' and 'Die Marquise von O' are abundant. In both texts a man proposes to a woman he barely knows in an unusual, formal way. He does this as a form of recompense, having in some way sexually violated her during their first meeting, despite his authority over her and despite a professional obligation to help her. The woman has previously been assaulted, or threatened with assault, by an organised, violent group. She sees herself as, or believes herself to be, chaste, or a virgin, and yet she has a child. The man and woman do indeed legally marry, but it is only after a substantial period of time that they live as man and wife. In both texts the man is characterised both as an angel and as a devil. And, crucially, in both texts, the women find it, at least initially, impossible to communicate, even to themselves, the trauma they have suffered. Meanwhile the male characters are comparatively in a position of some power, but experience their own kind of anguish manifesting in an inability to express, and to come to terms with, what they themselves have experienced and done.

In 'Die Marquise von O', the woman is the Marquise and the man is the Count. In 'Words to Say It' the woman is named Marina, and the man, who is the text's protagonist, is Ben. In order to analyse the characters of Ben and Marina, and their use of language, it will first be fruitful to examine in detail their first two encounters. This will serve as an introduction to their characterisation, to how they perceive each other, and lay out the scenario that brings them together in an unexpectedly intimate manner.

Constantine's story opens with Ben, a British, solitary, middle-aged man, embarking upon a holiday to a Greek island named Skleros. It is important to be aware that Ben struggles with a stammer, and in times of difficulty must turn to foreign languages, or other personas, to speak. The opening scene immediately puts a seasoned reader of Constantine in mind of his poem 'Watching for Dolphins', as discussed in a previous section of this thesis. A quintessential Constantine protagonist, Ben is on a boat, heading to an island, 'watch[ing] the blue-black sea for dolphins, longing like a child' (185). Even for a reader not familiar with the religious connotations of this Constantinean image, the use of 'longing' suggests that Ben realises, perhaps only subconsciously, that something is lacking in his life. For the reader who is aware of the divine or existential meaning of this image for Constantine, its presence establishes the mood that this longing regards something fundamental to his very mode of being.

The narrative quickly moves to Ben's experiences on the island, where he takes long walks to take in the rocky landscape and the sea. On one of these walks Ben goes for an impromptu swim, and, coming back to shore, he comes across the naked Marina and her child. They are otherwise alone. Prior to this encounter Constantine's language prepares the reader to associate Marina - or Ben's impression of Marina - with the duality of a simultaneously virginal and sensual woman throughout the text. In Ben's room on the Greek island, the only decoration is an icon of the Virgin Mary (187). While walking, a few hours before he sees Marina for the first time, Ben notices a group of women and girls who intend to visit the 'Monastery of the Virgin of Palestine' (190). The female visitors are inspected via a Judas Hole and, if they are sufficiently covered, are permitted to enter to view the Virgin's icon. If they are deemed to be too naked, instead they 'swil[l] their faces and their bare arms and shoulders at the well and

loo[k] down to the small scallop of turquoise sea very far below' (190). The text draws attention to the women's physical forms by listing the body parts and by the act of swilling, within a context of women's bodies being judged and rejected as unworthy of entering a sacred place. This creates an atmosphere of both sensuality and enforced chastity, with the example of a male gaze evaluating a female body regarding its nakedness foreshadowing the upcoming encounter. Meanwhile the connection between the women, the scallop and the sea, prepares the reader for the Botticelli-like Marina, whom Ben meets on the beach and whose name means 'of the sea'.

I want to explore here the many instances, in works by Kleist and Constantine and in Christian and classical contexts, in which female characters are portrayed as being both a virgin and a whore. In works by Kleist and Constantine these create paradox and blasphemy throughout the texts. Constantine explicitly associates Marina with Artemis ('Marina came into my life like the hounds and arrows of Artemis'). Artemis is the Greek goddess of chastity, and is associated with childbirth and the moon. Also associated with the moon are the Virgin Mary (in Christian iconography), menstruation and the sea (due to the tides). The Amazons in Kleist's *Penthesilea* are followers of Artemis, and her shrine is where the captured Greeks are led for the Rose Festival. Penthesilea herself is associated with the moon, both explicitly by Achilles ('Ich dachte eben, Ob du mir aus dem *Monde* niederstiegst?') and by way of the image of the bow, shaped like a crescent moon, which is the emblem of the Amazon state and its mores, both aggressively sexual and devoutly chaste, and founded as a response to male violence against women. Moon imagery occurs in 'Words to Say It': Ben remembers the encounter with Marina: 'the sickle of hot sand', she bowed. With regards to Kleist's story 'Das Erdbeben von Chili', Dietrick (1985:24-5) notes the irony

around the figure of the Virgin Mary: Jeronimo prays to the Virgin Mary to release him from his imprisonment for the crime of adultery; the unmarried Josephe is imprisoned in the Carmelite convent, the patron of which is the Virgin Mary, and gives birth on the steps of a cathedral. The earthquake, an "act of God", could appear to be a manifestation of divine approval of their crime. Jeronimo addresses Josephe as if she were the Virgin Mary and the description of the couple and their child, reunited in a natural setting, has often been compared to the Garden of Eden. 'Maria', 'Marina' and 'Marquise' sound remarkably similar. This is in keeping with Constantine's interest in depicting ordinary people as biblical figures.

The virgin-and-whore duality in the characterisation of women in the opening sections, then, serves not only to introduce Marina, but perhaps more importantly to introduce Ben's perception of Marina. The 'house of the miraculous icon and the women let in and not let in' (190) resonate as an image for Ben, who repeatedly thinks of them afterwards; it 'continued in his consciousness only as dreams do' (190). The swim in the sea that follows is a quasi-sexual experience for him: 'the pleasure shocked him by its thoroughness. Never in his life before had he entered into anything, been taken into anything, so entirely. Coolness, sliding all over him, silkily close' (191). Swimming to the shore, he comes across a naked woman - Marina - who is, at first, standing with her back to him and thus unaware of him. Marina is bending down over her child, and Constantine, repeating cognates of 'staring' five times in quick succession, emphasises Ben's gaze on her buttocks, 'the tuft of black hair in the opening below them', her breasts, and the 'lips of her sex':

> He stared and stared. His eyes felt the soft bulging of the place, its foldedness, its moistness, how it would open. Then he turned, went in deep again, swam fast to his clothes, dressed rapidly, and fled. (192)

No physical contact occurs here in their first encounter - a fundamental difference between this and the encounter in 'Marquise' - yet the language is that of sexual penetration. Ben continues to look at the woman even after she has noticed and made eye contact with him. She discountenances him to the point that he becomes ashamed of his own nakedness. Eventually he flees, as if from the scene of a crime, 'in ignominy' (195). He later recalls his actions as an 'insult' (199).

Ben continues to think of the chance meeting, and it is in this frame of mind that he returns to his work. He is employed by the council, or perhaps for a citizens advice organisation, advising clients on how to apply for housing, benefits and residence permits within the UK. Ben is assigned a new client, enters the interview room, and sees that it is the woman from the beach: Marina. He is overcome, is unable to speak and flees.

It would be remiss not to acknowledge the clear differences between the first encounter of the Marquise and the Count and the first encounters of Marina and Ben, both in terms of setting and in terms of physical contact. The Count rapes the Marquise while her home is under attack, and does so while she is unconscious and he is honour-bound to protect her. Ben does not rape Marina; he does not even touch her. If the reader has in mind Ovid's Latin account of the myth of Actaeon, he/she may remember Ovid's introductory comment: 'at bene si quaeras, Fortunae crimen in illo, non scelus invenies; quod enim scelus error habebat?' This is translated by A. S. Kline as 'But if you look carefully, you will find that it was the fault of chance and not wickedness: what wickedness is there in error?'. The reader might justifiably be inclined to agree, in this case, that Ben's coming across Marina unexpectedly on the beach and looking at her is in no way an intrinsically wicked act. Furthermore, their first encounter does not

take place in a war setting but rather on an otherwise deserted beach. As mentioned above, Marina is initially unaware of Ben looking at her naked body; however by the end of the encounter she has, according to Ben's account, seen him, and meets his gaze with her own.

In this way Constantine plays in the realm of ambiguity just as Kleist does. Why does Ben feel the need to make recompense to Marina to the extent of marrying her, if nothing has happened? Does the reader ask him- or herself this question, or do we assume we know the reason for it? Chaouli (2004) argues that critics are too quick to interpret the dash in 'Marquise' as rape and too quick to assume that the Count is the father of the Marquise's unborn child.

Nevertheless I propose that there are thematic and linguistic links to Kleist's novella in these encounters. The initial encounter is heavily sexualised. This is partly due to its association with the myth of Actaeon and Artemis, in which, whether or not Actaeon's punishment is held to be just, the fundamental format is that a man commits a sexual transgression against female virginity. More significant in this instance, however, is the active manner by which Ben sexualises in his mind both the encounter, and Marina's intentions. This is evidenced by the penetrative language Constantine uses and by Ben's obsessive erotic thoughts after the event.

When Ben's memory arrives at the moment of deepest intimacy, Marina's bending over, Constantine's writing even evokes Kleist's famous dash.
From Kleist's 'Die Marquise von O':

Hier – traf er, da bald darauf ihre erschrockenen Frauen erschienen [...]
(2013:106)

Constantine's TT of 'Die Marquise von O':

Thereupon - when, soon after, her terrified women appeared [...] (282)

From Constantine's 'Words to Say It':

And then - as it seemed to him - the knowing deliberate self-exposure [...] (194)

The first dash in this line from 'Words to Say It' does not function exactly like Kleist's, insofar as Constantine has been much more explicit about what happened during the encounter, and it is soon followed by a second dash that completes the first's grammatical purpose in the sentence. Nevertheless, in terms of the rhythm of the language, the sudden break in the flow that has built until this point does stop the reader short and implies that we have come to the crucial, difficult moment, a stumbling block - a notable effect employed by Kleist throughout his oeuvre and appropriate for a writer whose work is performed out loud (see Dyer 1977:164). Constantine's writing is characterised by its fluidity, and the text that precedes this sentence is no exception. An anaphora-like repetition swells, then comes to a stop with the dash, as Ben goes over the encounter in his memory: 'And again he experienced [...]. And then her face [...]. And then - as it seemed to him [...]' (194). Furthermore, the information contained within the dashes - a quick interjection by the third-person narrator - serves to highlight ambiguity in regard to who should be assigned responsibility for the incident. Constantine's Ben assigns a great deal of knowingness and covert agency to Marina, just as some critics have done with regard to the Marquise. Ben perceives her 'vengeful mocking'. This is developed by several instances in which she is associated with Artemis, with Ben figuring himself as Actaeon. In the myth, the mortal hunter Actaeon comes across the naked virgin goddess as she bathes, and as a result is forbidden from speaking. If he speaks, the goddess will turn him into a stag as punishment. He calls

out; Artemis turns him into a stag; and his own hounds rip him apart. In parallel with the myth, Ben perceives that although he makes the initial transgression, Marina, like Artemis, has most of the control and power in the situation, and he loses his ability to speak to her.

Despite Ben's attempts to reframe the power dynamics of the incident in his mind, his language rouses suspicion. The use of adverbs and subordinating conjunctions is studied in forensic linguistics, when analysing a suspect's narration of a period of time. This is known as 'text bridging', or, more colloquially, as 'hiding time', and it is a feature of speech which criminal interrogators are trained to identify and probe. The suspect will - consciously or unconsciously - use such phrases to skip over periods of time in which they may have been engaging in criminal activity. The phrase '[and] then' is a typical example of this, and has been shown in some studies to be the most prominently used text bridge (see Schafer 2008:21-22). 'And then' is, as shown above, used by Constantine repeatedly in the above passages. This, along with the dashes, contrive to suggest something more may have happened than is being reported. Kleist, with his dashes and hypotactic syntax, identified a feature of deception in language that is today used by the FBI to signal further questioning may be required.

What happened during the 'and then's in Ben's encounter with Marina? Is it possible that something more did occur - did Ben violate Marina physically? Unlike in Kleist's story, there is insufficient textual evidence to assert that this is the case in 'Words to Say It'; and yet, given Constantine's familiarity with Kleist's technique of "hiding time", it is a possible interpretation. As in the classical myth of Artemis and Actaeon, the crime of observing a naked woman is considered sufficiently violating to

demand recompense and punishment - perhaps, then, Ben's violation of Marina is of the same kind, albeit on a different scale, as that of the Count.

When Ben recalls the scene later, his unreliability as the character from whose perspective the narrative is related is made clear. He remembers an additional detail about Marina's actions, but, crucially, Constantine writes that 'he dreamed or wilfully added or truly remembered' this detail (194). Ben thinks he remembers that the woman, after making eye contact with him and bending down again, uses her fingers to 'open[..] and [hold] open the outer lips of the vulva' (195).

The second encounter is in a setting of potential violence - trauma and deportation. The word 'asylum' comes from Greek, meaning 'inviolable' (ἀ privative + σύλη , σῦλον' 'right of seizure' (*Oxford English Dictionary* online)). Whether or not Marina, a Ukrainian citizen, would be considered officially to be an asylum seeker, she is in the UK seeking an asylum from the trauma she endured in her homeland, and a safe place for her and her child. In their first two meetings, then, Ben fails her doubly: he violates her sexually, albeit not physically, and he abandons her when she has come to him in his professional capacity for help to remain in the UK, to remain in a place of asylum or inviolability. That she is ready to give up her claim and accept deportation after this second meeting, when anyone else might be expected to simply request an interview with another employee, is evidence that these two encounters are significant to her. Marina is in a vulnerable position in both cases - naked, and legally without protection. It is significant, I would argue, that Constantine includes a brief statement that Ben's supervisor makes to him immediately before Ben sees Marina at his workplace: 'But really she needs a husband, one with a UK passport, quick' (192). Also noteworthy is Constantine's description of Ben's feelings after this second encounter:

having been informed that Marina is not pursuing her claim to stay in the UK, and following a day spent dwelling on the erotic aspects of his memory of their first encounter, Ben sets out to write the letter that contains his marriage proposal 'in a mixture of feelings, chief among them being, so he told himself, professional shame' (195). Ben's act of restoration, the course of which, as in 'Die Marquise von O' takes up much of the chronology of the story, is to offer her remedy for the second, professional failing, while sexual intimacy and trust between them develops much more slowly - yet it is interesting that in both 'Die Marquise von O' and 'Words to Say It', the method by which a man remedies a sexually related professional failing is via marriage, a symbol of sexual union.

Prominent in 'Words to Say It' is the theme of dissocation, particularly regarding sex. One reviewer interprets the story in this way, labelling it 'a curiously male psychodrama of sexual dissociation and the inability to speak' (Harrison 2009). Who is the subject of the sexual dissociation is not explicit in the review; while the review might imply it is Ben, I would argue that Marina is also a valid candidate. In the following analysis I will analyse the text in this light.

As Marina and Ben get to know each other, Marina reveals that she had a twin sister. Marina's twin can be interpreted as a manifestation of the virgin-and-whore duality imposed upon Marina by men, as foreshadowed by the opening scenes on the island, and as a way to cope with this.

There are valid reasons to believe that Marina's deceased twin is an invention of her mind, a construct by which she can disassociate from the past sexual and physical trauma she describes as happening to the twin. The evidence for this interpretation is convincing, and the interpretation correlates strongly with Kleist's source text. Marina

reveals that her twin sister was named Lydia. Ephesus, in the historical Lydian kingdom, now a region of modern Turkey, was the site of the Temple of Artemis, which was said to have been established by the Amazons and later rebuilt by the king of Lydia (Budin 2016:21). In this temple Artemis, Lady of Ephesus, was worshipped. Depictions of the Greek Artemis and the Ephesian Artemis are very different, with the Greek Artemis representing chastity and the latter bearing many oval-shaped objects on her chest, interpreted to represent fertility (Budin 2016:22).

Some critics have suggested that the Marquise also represses the growing knowledge of what must have happened to her, and who caused it, even though it is clear to the reader, and the obviousness of her attacker's identity is expressed by her mother ('Who else [...] but him?' (Constantine 1997:309)). I do not agree with interpretations that suggest that the Marquise was fully aware of what was happening the whole time, and is deliberately denying any knowledge in order to avoid moral judgment (Kleist himself satirised this interpretation in an epigram titled 'Die Marquise von O': 'Sie hielt, weiss ich, die Augen bloss zu!' (2013:22)). Nevertheless, a case can certainly be made that the Marquise's mind is, whether entirely unconsciously or somewhat consciously, refusing to accept what has happened to her, since it does not match up with her own lived experience and the impressions she has of the Count as an angel who saved her. In Constantine's story this same refusal to acknowledge reality, this repression of knowledge about one's self, potentially manifests in sexual dissociation: Marina invents an imaginary twin; calls Tanya, who is her biological child, her twin's daughter; and thinks of herself as a virgin.

The possibilities that Marina's twin did exist, and that Marina's twin never existed, are mutually exclusive, and yet paradoxically can exist simultaneously in the

text. It is not explicitly stated in the story that Marina and Lydia were genetically identical twins; however, it is implied that they were, given that Marina states that she was easily able to use her sister's passport with very little risk. If we assume that Marina and Lydia were indeed separate entities and identical twins, then it follows that from a genetic standpoint (which, after all, physically makes up the essence of what humans are, their selves), Tanya is still as much Marina's genetic child as Lydia's, since the twins shared the same DNA. Given the horrific way by which Marina came to have custody of Tanya, this creates a further bitter parallel with the "miracle" of a virgin birth: Marina is a virgin, who, by means of a horrific incident, comes to be the mother of a child who is genetically her own child, and yet Marina has no experience of the conception of this child. This paradoxical image, in which several mutually exclusive facts can be true simultaneously, is the kind of paradoxical image that we see in Kleist - in the Marquise ('Ein reines Bewußtsein, und eine Hebamme!' (2013:122)) and in Alcmene - and in Constantine's other stories (see my analysis regarding Katya in 'In Another Country').

We might, however, interpret Ben as the sexually dissociative character. As a result of the initial sexual encounter with Marina, he must wear different personalities - taking on the persona of an older man or of a foreigner - in order to communicate with her. A straightforward interpretation of Ben's condition is that it mirrors that of Actaeon after his encounter with Artemis: the goddess forbids the hunter to speak. On the other hand, in this story the dissociation could be a result of Ben's traumatic past. Ben's father also had a stutter and could only turn to rage and violence when words failed him. This was, as Ben states, his 'brutal self-assertion' (209). As his name suggests, Ben Benson is not only the son of his father, but also, potentially, a twin-like

manifestation of his father, who turns to brutal self-assertion when his words fail. We see that Ben instead relieves his anguish by using coded language - formal or foreign language.

An unexpected, but entirely apt, intertext emerges when Ben relates to Marina the most harrowing occasion of his father's violence. Ben tells her how, in the midst of his father's rage, his mother dragged Ben, her young son, to the bathroom for safety, and locked the door behind them. In his mother's embrace, Ben watched as his father punched through the middle panel of the bathroom door. Ben frequently sees the image of his father's bloody fist through the door, whether or not he wishes to. This scene will strike many readers as being similar to an image from the film *The Shining* (1980), directed by Stanley Kubrick and based on Stephen King's 1977 novel. The image in question occurs at the climax of the film, when Jack Torrance, having apparently lost much of his sanity, is violently pursuing his wife Wendy and their young son Danny through the Overlook hotel. Wendy and Danny flee to their bathroom and lock the door behind them. Jack, played by Jack Nicholson, uses an axe to smash through the panel of the bathroom door to reach them. The scene of the axe smashing through the door, and Jack forcing his face through the smashed door, has become a cultural icon, and is typically chosen to appear on the covers of VHS and DVD versions. It can be assumed that many of Constantine's readers will be familiar with it.

What makes this film reference especially significant is the fact that the plot of *The Shining,* a horror film, is fundamentally built on dissociation, both in the case of Jack, who appears to have been possessed by the malevolent spirit of the Overlook Hotel, having conversations with its ghosts, and in the case of Danny, whose "shining" ability allows him to dissociate into his alternate-persona Tony. There are differences

between the novel, film and TV series versions of the narrative regarding the extent to which these dissociating entities objectively exist as separate entities. However, it is consistent across the versions that in both characters' cases the sources of their dissociations are implied to be internal or psychological as well as external or supernatural.

Jack is an aggressive father, a failing writer and alcoholic, with a history of violent outbursts. He blames his family for his inability to write, and the chilling proof of his madness is revealed when Wendy discovers that the "novel" he has been working on is hundreds of pages of one endlessly repeated idiom. The film's bathroom scene is the explosion of anger that follows. In the scene, Jack speaks exclusively in sound-bites from outside sources, with various voices and accents, adopting several personas: not just that of the possessed killer, but of the Big Bad Wolf ('Little pigs, little pigs!') and TV personality Ed McMahon ('Here's Johnny!'). Jack's Overlook-persona, whether or not it is born out of the supernatural, is arguably also a physical manifestation of his inability to communicate in his own writer's voice, resulting in his rage against his family and his overwhelming desire to destroy them.

Jack seems to have passed dissociating tendencies to his son, Danny. Danny's persona Tony seems to know things of which Danny is not consciously aware. Tony, it is suggested, is a coping mechanism that manifests in the form of an imaginary friend, who allows Danny to distance himself psychologically from dangerous situations and who is able to express the reality of the situation even while the danger still lingers below the surface. "Tony" speaks in a strange, croaking voice that is distinct from Danny's normal voice. Interestingly, Tony is only able to warn mother and son of the danger in invented language, in a form of a code: REDRUM, which, when viewed in

the mirror, becomes MURDER. While in *The Shining* Danny's dissociation terrifies but ultimately protects him, in King's sequel, *Doctor Sleep*, it emerges that Danny has also inherited his father's alcoholism, anger problems and ghosts. Thus trauma is passed down the generations, and dissociation is both a cause of, and symptom of, the experience of horror.

The Shining is a narrative in which dissociation, the breaking down of a stable identity, is both self-protective and self-destructive. It emerges in a person as a physical change of voice, and in codified language. It speaks unbearable truths, but can sometimes only do so in an oblique way. I highlight the similarities here between *The Shining* and Kleist's and Constantine's texts partly because introducing other texts into the textual network may prompt new insight into older texts, and demonstrate the ways in which Kleist's concerns continue to fascinate and terrify the modern reader, and also because I propose that the reader of Constantine's story is likely to be put in this frame of mind, thus emphasising the dissociative strands within the story.

It is noteworthy, however, that dissociation does not only occur when the person in question has been a victim of trauma. It is also a psychological response associated with *perpetrators* of trauma - that is to say, the individual may adopt a detached persona, or be unable to remember events in which he/she was involved, because of the traumatic situation he/she created (see Becker-Blease and Freyd 2007). I would argue that Ben and the Count can be seen in this light. The codified, highly formal language, and use of different voices can be understood as involuntary ways to distance oneself from the crime committed.

The sexual disassociation, regardless of which character(s) we might attribute it to, manifests in an inability to speak conventional language, or in an ability to speak a

beautiful unconventional language. Ben, who stammers, learns the childish nonsense language spoken by Marina's daughter, and we later discover, also spoken by Marina herself in a half-sleep to express trauma, the self-knowledge that she has been repressing. This links to the fundamental idea of Constantine's of the value and beauty of constructing language, even (especially) strange language, and 'making clear sentences'.

Broken language, broken speech and broken identities: if we understand these to be an outward expression of the fragility of the world, it is possible to begin to forgive and pity our fellow humans for what they do to us. In my analysis of emblems in Constantine and Kleist, the theme of breaking and brokenness is frequently present. 'Words to Say It' also focuses on brokenness, but it is the brokenness of language, of self-knowledge, and of identity. The world is fragile:

> The pity in Kleist is the awareness of fragility. And the ability to forgive, and they don't all forgive, but die Marquise von O- [...] is the feeling that we're not-the world is fragile and liable to collapse and we should look after one another (Constantine, appendix B)

Several paradoxes are present within 'Words to Say It' that reflect the paradoxes in 'Die Marquise von O'. Marina/the Marquise are both virgins and yet sexualised by the world around them. Ben/the Count are simultaneously angels and devils who both save and harm. The Marquise identifies this incongruity in her perception of the Count as one of the chief reasons for her distress: 'er würde ihr damals nicht wie ein Teufel erschienen sein, wenn er ihr nicht, bei seiner ersten Erscheinung, wie ein Engel vorgekommen wäre' (2013:143). Meanwhile, Ben, as he goes to deliver his apology and proposal letter to Marina, and cycles past the dubious characters who reside in Marina's rundown neighbourhood, muses: 'Perhaps he seemed to them an angel' (196). These paradoxes also serve the overarching paradox of dissociation, which is ultimately

a refusal to accept knowledge of one's self, and a refusal to communicate one's self to others, as a method to preserve the self against the horror of the real world: as Constantine states, Kleist's texts surround the topic of 'What people can bear to do to other people and then live their normal lives' (appendix B).

6. KLEIST, BANVILLE AND CONSTANTINE: COMPARING APPROACHES

To begin my discussion of intertextuality within the oeuvres, I turn once again to Kleist's image of the arch, and how it relates to the structure of Banville's oeuvre. Banville's intricate intertextuality is a central feature of most scholarly studies of his works. Palazzolo highlights that intertextual and intratextual references in Banville's oeuvre contribute to a 'tension between totality and fragmentation' (2019:103). Particularly significant in this regard, she convincingly argues, is intratextuality, here seen in the 'cross-referencing' that occurs throughout Banville's oeuvre. Characters, narrators, references and names reoccur across the works. This is most notable with regard to the concept of a series, or a sequence, within the oeuvre - for example, the Art trilogy - since, as Palazzolo states, the form of a series inherently 'embodies a textual paradox that defers closure while gesturing towards the formation of a whole' (103). Palazzolo quotes Banville regarding the formation of the Art trilogy: 'when I finished that [*The Book of Evidence*] I realized there had to be a third one. It had to be an arch shape, with *Ghosts* as a kind of central stone. But I'm not sure I was right; maybe *Athena* was one book too many' (see Palazzolo 103). Palazzolo argues that Banville's statement is evidence that the trilogy is 'as much a result of Banville's improvisation as of the wish to adopt a patterned triadic frame with *'Ghosts* as a kind of central stone''', suggesting that the series' construction occurred 'in random fashion' (104). I would argue that Banville's statement can be read in a Kleistian light. Kleist's image of an arch has been referenced throughout this thesis, as an emblem of paradoxically coexisting stability and destruction. That Banville, along with Palazzolo, questions whether the third novel in this series "fits" within it, suggests to me not that the arch metaphor is faulty, or erroneously applied, but that the arch that the Art trilogy forms is

fragile, not perfectly symmetrical, simultaneously holding and striving to fall. Inter-

and intratextuality within oeuvres create structures within the body of work that reflect

the themes of those works.

> I do think that if you put a reference in, if you put a quote in, and you don't attribute it, it gives a kind of resonance, it's like shaking a spider's web [...] there's a vibration in it (appendix A)

This conception of intertextuality is another physical engagement with, but not

destruction of, a construction that relies on tension to maintain its shape (the 'shaking

[of the] spider's web'). The resonance that Banville describes also finds a place in

Constantine's way of thinking:

> There's an awful lot in ecological thinking, anti-mechanistic thinking where the whole web is a web. It's held together because all the parts are in play. [...] And the literary work is pieced together, but there's no kind of sovereign over it, or boss, it's a work in the parts, and all the parts matter. It's going back to this living corpus of literature - you can't take something away without the whole thing being diminished.
>
> [...]
>
> I've used this instance once before. Václav Havel was a dissident in the Czech Republic, and he edited magazines and he was a playwright, and he got bunged in jail, and then he became president. He wrote very interestingly about what happens when a regime closes down magazines, and he completely uses this ecological image. He says even if you hadn't read that magazine, even if hardly anybody had read that magazine, something, and he calls it a 'possibility', has been taken out. The possibility that somebody would read it, or that in an interplay with others it would have effected some change, you've removed it. And obviously you can carry on removing things to a certain point and the thing kind of more or less keeps going, but there will come a point where it won't work anymore, there won't be enough that is interacting. And the way it's going, this is like the desperate image in Kleist of holding the whole thing up, we're pretty near that. (appendix B)

Like Banville, Constantine states that it is not always important to him whether or not a

reader is consciously aware that a reference to another writer is being made within his

texts:

Such things are points of reference and illustrative instances for me and it doesn't matter in the least whether they are for the readers of my poems or stories. All that matters is that they work in the new context into which I have put them. (appendix B)

The result of such an approach is that, in these cases, Kleist's name is not being broadcast in the texts. This does not preclude the possibility that a reader will investigate an image or a reference further. Additionally, it can be argued that it does not diminish the presence of Kleist's writing (or whoever the source writer in question may be) in the target text. A veiled or subtle resonance remains a resonance that creates ripples within the new context.

As Constantine mentions, the concept of a web or arch of interconnected units is not only central to intertextuality, and ecology - it also fits within a Kleistian discussion. The fragility and contingent nature of the world expressed in Kleist's works is clearly attractive to those who have devoted their art to creating resonances and vibrations within literature. Creating a new connection between two texts adds to the ambiguity of both texts, in the same way that connections made in Kleist's texts typically do not serve to clarify causality within the narrative, but rather increase uncertainty. Chapter 4 discussed causality in 'Das Erdbeben in Chili', in which events - the upcoming execution, the earthquake, the church service and ultimate murders - seem to be linked by some form of causality, and yet the twisted, apparent logic of the plot is impossible to decipher. These possible causal connections have sparked a plethora of interpretations of Kleist's novella and of each event in its own right; the shadow cast by one of these events affects our interpretation of another. Likewise, the analysis of connections between oeuvres of two (or more) authors, such as is the focus

of this thesis, can contribute to new readings of both texts, not in order to determine or

pigeonhole, but in order to problematise and widen.

> Bakhtin's stress on otherness, like his stress on polyphony, double-voiced discourse, dialogism and a host of other concepts we have not touched on here, all stem from a recognition that language is never our own, that there is no single human subject who could possibly be the object of psychological investigation, that no interpretation is ever complete because every word is a response to previous words and elicits further responses. As Todorov writes: 'The most important feature of the utterance, or at least the most neglected, is its dialogism, that is, its intertextual dimension. After Adam, there are no nameless objects, nor any unused words' (Allen, G. (2011:27) quoting Bakhtin and Todorov).

The Adam of *The Infinities* can claim, to some extent, to take after his Biblical

namesake. As the discoverer of the Infinities, the relationships and atoms that make up

the parallel universes, he has, perhaps, discovered, a 'nameless object'. His ability to

appear in the novel as the comatose old man, the gods, and the author-insert, gives him

authority over the text greater than any other character. Despite this, his actions are

predetermined, in that they follow the pattern laid out by Banville's *God's Gift*, by

Kleist's *Amphitryon*, and by the classical sources that predate Kleist's text. No

character can ever be said to exist independently of the corpus of world literature, just

as no author can exist independently of its influence. Whilst this might strike the

layman as a statement that suggests the absence, or impossibility, of creativity, for the

Translation Studies scholar the opposite is true. As Allen proposes, the result is in fact a

bottomless well of potential for creativity, since 'no interpretation is ever complete'

(2011:27). An infinity of responses is sparked with every new word.

> Language is like Amphitryon himself. Bakhtin argues that a speaker
>
> receives [every] word from another's voice and filled with that other voice. The word enters his context from another context, permeated with the interpretations

of others. His own thought finds the word already inhabited. (Bakhtin 1982, quoted in Allen 2011:27)

Such a realisation is not necessarily always a welcome one. It may prompt the anguish Amphitryon feels when he finds himself displaced by the other, his identity filled, his place already inhabited. If, as Banville believes, each of us is made up not of a soul or single 'pilot light', but rather of a sum of our 'postures and [...] poses' (appendix A), and if these postures and poses are never original but always borrowed from others, what becomes of us? 'Who if not I, then, is Amphitryon?'

The sanctity of the image is broken throughout the works of Banville and Constantine. Schneider describes the central theme of Kleist's source text as the 'demise of the power of iconic representation, the defacement of the symbolic imagery of the state and community' (2000:508). He notes that the word-play surrounding 'unbildlich' and Adam's fall in the opening scene foregrounds this theme. In his version of *The Broken Jug*, Constantine repeatedly uses the word 'figure', in various contexts: to refer to the icon of the jug, and to refer to Adam ('the figure I cut', 'disfigurement'). This, combined with the aural word-play situated around 'jug' and 'judge' in the target text (discussed in Chapter 2), has many implications for the shattering of the physical icon. Adorned with the visual history of the state, the broken jug not only represents Eve's supposedly broken chastity, but also shatters the illusion of authority and justice wielded by the institutions of power. Banville's image of Ireland as a young woman being raped by Britain - discussed in Chapter 4 - plays into this imagery, whereby the sexual, aesthetic and political combine.

The intratextuality present in Banville's works - whereby one Banville text will reference another - smashes the idea of a true original. As Friberg-Harnesk

convincingly argues throughout her monograph, Banville's texts are located within the world of simulcra, imitations, and whether there ever was a true "original" is put into doubt.

Blasphemy and paradox - the shattering of logic - have been discussed throughout the thesis, particularly with reference to Constantine's oeuvre. Banville's *Amphitryon* target texts are themselves blasphemous, in that classical gods are inserted into Christian Ireland. The ties between iconoclasm or blasphemy and intertextuality are clear. The defacement of an authoritative original or the "truth" frees the reader, translator or author to create an infinity of possibilities.

I have discussed above similarities between the views of translation, adaptation, agency and authority espoused by Banville and Constantine, and which partly account for Banville's and Constantine's shared interest in Kleist. This is not so say, however, that their perspectives align entirely, or even to any large extent.

I will move on, here, to an exploration of the reasons why Constantine himself has said that he translates. In her monograph, Chantal Wright lays out various categories of literary translator, who translate with different aims in mind and under different conditions. Constantine might be said to fall under the category of the humanist translator, as identified by Wright:

> much translation comes about because practitioners and cultures believe that access to foreign literature and thought has the potential to improve the lives of individual human beings and of humankind. We translate so that others can read good books (some of which we choose to call 'Great Books'); to encounter other cultures and expose ourselves to difference; to allow ideas to circulate; and to bear witness (Wright 2016)

To this end, perhaps, Constantine's approach to translation, at least the kind of translation he is doing with his Kleist target texts, is source-text-oriented. The love of the source text sets up a conventional hierarchy between the 'original' and the translation:

> Translation is a service, it serves a foreign text. [...] It is done by people who love the texts they are translating, who wish their authors to be better known, who believe good will come of it. Still, it is service. The page is not bare, there is a text on it, which the translator must address, is bound by, is there to serve [...] In translation even the making of poetry is a means to an end: to get the beloved and revered original across, to serve it (Constantine 2013c: 44).

In the 2019 edition of the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*, Jones discusses the ethical aspects pertinent to literary translation, stating that 'many literary translators see loyalty to their source writer's intent and/or style as an ethical imperative' (2019:296). Even if translation is considered to be an autonomous act, 'acting autonomously [on behalf of] others implies ethical responsibility' (ibid.). It is a belief of this kind, which Jones notes is commonly held amongst literary translators, that Constantine appears to express when he speaks of the service-autonomy 'dynamic' or 'quarrel' in his own translation process (appendix B). Some degree of autonomy must be present to produce anything at all, yet despite this autonomy it could be argued that the translator nevertheless bears an ethical obligation to the source author and, as Constantine suggests, to those readers who have access to the source author's works only through the translator (ibid.).

Service to the source text is not, however, the only reason Constantine identifies for undertaking the difficult task of translation. I want now to look at the key term when considering Constantine's view of translation, and writing: that of coming into

'the free use of one's own' ('der freie Gebrauch des Eigenen'), an idea and phrase which he takes from Hölderlin (see Constantine 2013c:36). Constantine argues, via Hölderlin, that the way to become more proficient in one's own language is to go abroad first. It is only by encountering the foreign that we can come to know our own selves and languages. Constantine thinks of translation as a crucial apprenticeship for writers, drawing especially from this view as espoused by, for example, Keats. As Constantine notes, this mindset is characteristic of the Romantic tradition of translation, which itself took its cue from the Roman tradition, almost two millennia earlier (ibid.; see also Kelly 1998:495).

In some phrasing Constantine conceives of this almost transactionally: coming into the 'free use of one's own' is conceptualised as the benefit of translating for a writer, a quid pro quo for the service to the text:

> [Writers] want elbow-room, they don't want to serve, they want autonomy. And in fact any translator-poet, deep in the work and however scrupulously serving the foreign text, always consciously or unconsciously asks the question, 'What's in it for me?' The desire is always to come into 'the free use of one's own', to be better in your native tongue; and translation, even or perhaps especially in the conflict of its demands, is a help. (2013c: 45-6)

'What's in it for me?' It is clear that, for Constantine's translations of Kleist, the fact of having produced a standalone text is not the answer to this question, or at least not the sole answer. Note his wording: 'the desire is *always* to come into the free use of one's own'' (italics mine). Constantine does not believe in the standalone autonomy of the translation as the end goal - instead translation serves the source text, with lesser and greater degrees of autonomy, and is a 'way to autonomy' in one's "own" writing. This

is in contrast to Banville's perspective which, I would argue, would take the position

that a good part of "what's in it for him" is that he produces a new Banville text.

Nevertheless, as discussed above, the translator *does* require autonomy, and I

would summarise Constantine's position as a translator by juxtaposing two adjectives

he has used to describe his approach: 'attentive' and 'assertive'. To attend to the Other,

while asserting the Self, is a means by which to attempt to express the amalgamation of

two writers.

Additionally, for Constantine, it is predominantly by engaging with the foreign,

the unfamiliar, by encountering a foreign language, or by encountering another author's

writing, that the artist develops his or her writing ability and world view. It is when

presented with the Other that we are most able to interrogate and develop our Self.

The social implications of adaptation and translation are not the focus of

Banville's attention. For Constantine, on the other hand, poetry, or poetic writing, has a

vital role to play, and the 'free use of one's own' is a central part of it:

> Poetry now, every bit as much as in the Romantic age, is a utopian
> demonstration, by aesthetic means, of what true freedom would be like. It
> engages us to imagine something better than what at present we are afflicted
> with; it helps keep hope alive; it incites us to make more radical demands. And
> poetry does that out of the enjoyment of its own autonomy, which it is duty-
> bound not to forfeit. (2013c: 69)

Poetry and translation are radical encounters with the Other that encourage empathy for

others and for one's self. They make citizens more critical thinkers; they encourage

democracy (appendix B). And Kleist's works are radically compassionate, and full of

pity, in that they break down conventional notions of good and evil, right and wrong,

deserving and undeserving, and exemplify the 'Zerbrechlichkeit' - fragility - of the

world (ibid.). Constantine's words make clear why he considers Kleist to be a 'writer we need now' (ibid.).

By most standards, Constantine is a politically engaged writer. Whether it is through his translations and versions - of Brecht's texts, for example - or in his short stories, he does not shy away from the kind of political commentary that is also evidenced by the impassioned statements he made during our interview (appendix B). What is particularly interesting, although perhaps not surprising, is that literature, and translation, are often linked to political contexts in his fictions, and have a social function. Several examples of this aspect of his writing can be found in just one of his short-story collections. *Tea at the Midland* (2012), for example, includes the short stories 'Strong Enough to Help', in which a social worker begins a series of visits to an old man to discuss poetry; 'Lewis and Ellis', in which literature is the life force of a man dying in a hospice; and 'Leaving Frideswide', in which an elderly man quietly translates Sophocles into English, employing what appears to be Constantine's own translation process, while receiving the news that his home, a commune that houses some of society's most vulnerable members, is being forced into disbandment by the Department of Social Security. Criticism of the shortcomings of the current British welfare state, caused by prevailing capitalistic and ideologically right-wing sentiments, fuses with a Kleistian scenario in Constantine's 'Words to Say It', discussed in the previous chapter: due to an unforgiving immigration system, Marina is left with no better choice than to marry the stranger who violated her. It is chiefly through language-learning and translation that the two are able to reconcile and become a married couple in an emotional sense.

Even in cases where the content of a text is not thematically political, Constantine holds that literature has an inherently political quality. Consider the following passage from Constantine's treatise *Poetry: The Literary Agenda*:

> In a poem beauty can be made out of feelings that in practical life may be deeply unpleasant. […] Aestheticism is the pursuit of beauty in art as an end in itself. We want none of that. We want beauty in verse and the pleasure of it as help in answering back, in imagining better, in believing in the possibility of something other than the wrong and ugliness daily being perpetrated. We don't ask for consolation but for quickening by pleasure in beauty to revolt. Poets are makers. […]
>
> 'Poetry makes nothing happen.' Auden's statement (decoupled from what follows it and abstracted from the poetic context and endlessly trotted out) is wrong on many counts, not least this: that reading or listening to poetry, like all sensuous experience, does things to the brain, does indeed make things happen in the brain. The language of poetry, being inexhaustibly varied, makes an equivalent variety of demands. Much the same might be said about reading or listening to prose perhaps. Reading Kleist in German or Henry James in English is not at all like reading the Gospels in the Luther Bible (2013c:62)

The vocabulary in this passage is reminiscent of that used by the narrator in Constantine's short story 'An Island'. The narrator is Constantine's most explicitly Kleistian figure, one whose attempts to 'answe[r] back' and 'transgress' largely took the form of 'making clear sentences' (see Chapter 5). According to Constantine's belief, poetry, and literature in general, has a social and political function regardless of its content: poetry is revolt.

> Consider, by contrast, the following statement, made by Banville:

> [Art] has no other purpose than to make you feel more vividly alive. It carries no message, it's not going to change the world, it's not going to stop the Israelis fighting the Palestinians, it's not going to stop Donald Trump tweeting. Auden is right: poetry makes nothing happen. You can apply that to all the arts. But making nothing happen is in itself a positive thing, because art is completely inutile, it's not useful for anything, we can't use it. If you politicise it, it becomes bad art (appendix A)

I will note here that whilst Banville's words, particularly in relation to Auden, may appear to be in complete opposition to Constantine's statements, Banville's assertion that the purpose of art is to make one 'feel more vividly alive', and that its uselessness is positive, arguably alludes to a stimulating effect in the reader's brain that is comparable to the effect proposed by Constantine.

Nevertheless, it is clear that, to take each author's statements at face value, the two men hold very different views in this regard. In Banville's case, it has been demonstrated throughout this thesis that he himself characterises his writing as entirely apolitical. This would appear to hold true for much of Banville's oeuvre, as Banville scholars have noted (see McMinn 1999:6). I have questioned, however, whether this can justifiably be said of Banville's Kleist dramas, despite Banville's own assertions. Even with regard to *God's Gift* and *The Broken Jug*, Banville insists that the shift to a politically charged setting was purely intended to generate laughter amongst his audience (appendix A). As I have argued in Chapters 2, 3 and 4, the effects of the changes in setting in these texts do have unavoidable political ramifications, even if no particular political point is being made. This contradiction between Banville's Kleist target texts and the remainder of his oeuvre is one of the most unexpected aspects of his engagement with Kleist.

With regard to the approach to translation and adaptation each author adopts, the differences between the two perspectives are borne out in the target texts under discussion in this thesis. As has been demonstrated in earlier chapters, Constantine is eager not to introduce themes, language or 'emphases' he considers to be alien to the source text (appendix B). He renders what he terms 'equivalences' for the instances of word play, and his intimate knowledge of the German language, and of Kleist's writing

in particular, as well as his views on the purposes of translation, result in a version that exudes the 'concentration' that Constantine identifies as a crucial duty of the translator (ibid.). Banville's texts, meanwhile, clearly demonstrate the autonomy that he feels in relation to a source text, both in terms of theme and setting, and in terms of linguistic structure. Additionally, of the two anglophone authors, Banville has a lesser degree of familiarity with the German language (appendix A), and with academic debates in Translation Studies. It is important to emphasise that this observation is not intended to create the impression of any form of value judgement in favour of either author's approach, but rather to account for differences in strategy.

A related factor to consider when contrasting translation approaches and the resulting target texts is the presumed audience of the text, particularly when the text under discussion is a drama: that is, a consideration of whether the text is primarily intended for the page or for the stage. Constantine was asked to translate Kleist as part of a book series, and is not aware of any of his translations having been used in a theatrical production (appendix B). Conversely, Banville states that his versions of Kleist's dramas arose out of a desire to put Kleist on stage, and, indeed, as material for a specific theatre company whose previous performances he had admired (appendix A). Thus, the physical staging of Banville's Kleist target texts was guaranteed from their conception: they were written for that specific purpose. Jones notes that 'looser relationships between source and target texts are [...] particularly common in drama', often due to a desire to connect to a specific geographical or temporal audience (2019:295). The implication is that this is the case when the particular drama is designed to be performed on stage.

Espasa, in her discussion of the concept of 'performability' in theatre translation, links an increase in a target text's so-called 'performability' or 'speakability' with the perceived 'naturality' of the language of the text (2000:96). Espasa notes the paradox that in order to be considered to be a 'good' translation by a general audience and by reviewers, a translation should be 'invisible' - that is 'fluid', 'transparent', 'hid[ing] the fact that it is indeed a translation' (ibid.). Popular theatre culture's push towards 'naturality' sits in opposition to Constantine's commitment to 'Otherwhereish' language, and would seem to align with Banville's desire to 'get people into the theatre' and not alienate his audience ('I wanted people to come to these plays and enjoy them' (appendix A)). As was demonstrated by close readings of selected target-text passages in chapters 2 and 3 of this thesis, Constantine's choices in syntax and vocabulary frequently have a disorienting effect, deliberately making the reader expend significant mental energy, whilst Banville's style is structurally more straightforward. Whilst the motivations behind such choices are extensive, and have been discussed elsewhere, it is worth considering that the intended primary recipient of the target text, whether the reader of the page or audience member at the stage, is likely to have some impact on a translated text.

7. CONCLUSION

In this thesis I have mapped out a small section of the intertextual web that surrounds Banville and Constantine, bringing together texts from a wide variety of times, places and genres: from Stanley Kubrick's film *The Shining*, to Ovid's *Metamorphoses*; from the headlines of the 1980s Irish tabloids, to Shakespeare. At the heart of this web is Kleist, whose extraordinary writing has been a major inspiration for Banville and Constantine, among many other writers. By adopting a methodology that combines close textual analysis of selected texts - both German- and English-language texts - with a broader understanding of the authors' oeuvres as a whole, I have contributed a new perspective to the critical literature on Banville's engagement with Kleist - which has thus far emanated from an English- and Irish-Studies perspective - and to the critical literature on Constantine's engagement with Kleist, which is scant. Additionally, Kleist's works have served as a common ground via which to compare and contrast the works of two anglophone authors. This thesis is the first study of its kind to associate Banville and Constantine in this way.

I also hope to add to the critical argument that aims to look beyond what might conventionally be labelled a target text in order to identify new connections across cultural and temporal boundaries. Both Banville and Constantine have spoken widely about the roles adaptation and intertextuality play within their oeuvres, and on their writing processes. The 'resonances' or 'vibrations' Banville identifies as issuing from an intertextual reference; the conception of texts as 'possibilities' existing with the 'living corpus of literature', as expressed by Constantine: no matter how subtle these are, their particular tones ring out, and, in this way, Kleist's work continually finds new

life as ever more texts enter the corpus. Whether or not the average anglophone reader has heard of him, the presence of Kleist is still felt in the anglophone literary world.

The analyses in this thesis have explored the themes of paradox, blasphemy and injustice. I have demonstrated how, on the basis of a reference to Kleist's arch emblem in one of Constantine's short stories, we can trace the influence of Kleist throughout the variety of structural emblems which litter Constantine's writing. I have considered the ways in which Banville's target texts, atypical within his oeuvre for their explicitly political settings, complement his other writing. The thesis has incorporated valuable material obtained from interviews I conducted with the authors, and thereby provides substantial transcripts that record the first-hand perspectives of two prominent authors. The transcripts are the source of a wealth of rich material that can be mined for interpretative gems by future researchers.

Chapters 2 and 3 compared passages from Kleist's *Der zerbrochne Krug* and *Amphitryon* with Banville's and Constantine's target texts. It was demonstrated that in Banville's *The Broken Jug*, its Irish setting creates particular resonances surrounding double identities and the abuse of power, which are also key themes of Kleist's texts, and of Banville's *God's Gift.* Constantine's texts pay meticulous attention to Kleist's syntax and language, reflecting the disorienting syntax of the source texts, whilst also developing the theme of the power of language and utilising Christian imagery.

Chapter 4 discussed Kleist's presence within Banville's wider oeuvre, with a continuation of the discussion of the ways in which Banville's engagement with Kleist plays into his intense interest in the image of the twin, and of the conceptualisation of knowledge. Political aspects of the texts, despite Banville's stated lack of interest in making political points, were also explored.

Chapter 5 investigated texts by Constantine that, in most cases, had no explicit or conscious association with Kleist. Nevertheless, strong thematic and structural ties - such as paradoxes, the (unconscious) suppression of knowledge, and the use of emblems - are, I have argued, evidence of the impact of Kleist on Constantine's works.

Chapter 6 compared more broadly the perspectives on translation and intertextuality espoused by Banville and Constantine. Analysing statements made by the two authors, I investigated the motivations behind, and the ramifications of, each of their perspectives.

Fascinating encounters with Kleist abound outside of the texts selected here for analysis, and future research will be needed to uncover them. I will particularly highlight here the works of British-American dramatist and theatre critic, Eric Bentley (1916-2020), which are ripe for investigation with regard to his re-workings of Kleist's plays. Additionally, the scholarly literature would benefit from further readings of Banville and Constantine with relation to their adaptation work. I have argued that Kleist's presence pervades the artistic creations and perspectives of the authors discussed in this thesis. To provide comprehensive close readings of their entire oeuvres has proved to be beyond the limits of this study, but I am confident that - as has proved to be the case during my research - with every repeated reading of one of Banville's novels, or of a short story by Constantine, a new intertextual connection, whether Kleistian or otherwise, will spark in the reader's mind.

It should be acknowledged that Kleist is by no means the only source of writerly impact on either Banville or Constantine. Constantine, as can be perceived in the interview transcript in this thesis, has been hugely influenced academically and artistically by his engagement with Hölderlin (and, partly but not solely through

Hölderlin, the classical world), amongst many other authors. Banville's influences are also numerous, with Henry James, Samuel Beckett and W. B. Yeats featuring predominantly amongst them. These figures, and many more, have been named as conscious influences, but any author's list of literary forebears, both conscious and unconscious, is by its nature incalculable. The argument of this thesis does not intend to imply that the strong presence, as I have interpreted it, of Kleist within each oeuvre necessitates a reduction of other authorly presences within the texts. Indeed, the opposite is true; each potentially Kleistian image brings with it associations that only expand the intertextual web in which every literary work exists.

The question of terminology is relevant here. Is it justified to use the term 'influence' to describe the relationship between Kleist and Banville or Constantine? This is debatable for several reasons: first, because 'influence' perhaps suggests a more direct and straightforward relationship between texts than the evidence bears out, especially when it comes to considering conscious influence on a writer, of which, in reality, even the writer himself may not be fully aware; and secondly, because it can imply a hierarchical flow between source and target text that discourages a way of thinking that sees texts as existing dynamically within a web of intertextuality, where the reading of a later text can, and often does, affect the interpretation of an earlier text, and where polygonal relationships can emerge that connect target texts on their own terms. What, then, might be an alternative terminology? Throughout the thesis I have referred to the relationships between authors as 'engagement', or as resulting in a 'presence' of the source author in the oeuvre of the target author. Between them, Banville and Constantine have used the terms 'interplay' and 'resonance' to describe this dynamic (see appendices). As discussed in Chapter 1, it is not my aim in this thesis

to establish discrete, final definitions of these terms; on the contrary, I hope that through my analyses I have provided further evidence of the problematic and unhelpful nature of attempting to categorise definitively these textual relationships. As Venuti argues in *Contra Instrumentalism: a Translation Polemic,* every act of interpretation, reading or translation 'potentially releases an endless semiosis' (2019:3). Within that process of endless semiosis, which is unique to every reader, how could it be possible to label exactly the nature of each reader's or translator's engagement with a text?

I would argue that it is both the charge and the right of every reader to discover his or her own associations within a text. In 'The Reader as Author' Beer states that the 'reader is both a silent individual bringing the text into being anew – and differently – in this particular place, moment, and society, and also a product of the language of the text' (2014:3), and quotes Lee, who remarks that the 'strings' of the reader's mind 'are always on the point of sounding and jangling uninvited' (Lee in Beer 2014:3). This thesis is an exploration of the texts of Constantine and Banville from the perspective of a reader whose 'strings' are particularly ready to 'jangle' at a Kleistian image or structure, and other readers may be more or less convinced of the intensity of Kleist's presence in these texts. It is not my desire to overstate the presence of Kleistian thinking within the oeuvres of Banville or Constantine, but rather to lay out the connections - some speculative - as they have emerged in my reading and analysis of the texts.

Those who have been entranced by the enigmatic quality of Kleist's writing typically feel strongly that his artistic legacy should be recognised and publicised more widely. They become evangelical, determined to get the message out there. When Banville thought that the Irish theatre of the 1990s was 'moribund', stuck on endless

productions of Oscar Wilde, it was to Kleist that he turned to revive it. 'I wanted to put Kleist on at the theatre in Ireland,' he says, bluntly. 'Kleist [is] one of my heroes. I don't have many. But he would be one of them. [...] I wish he'd lived longer'. When Constantine looks back on his translations, his admiration of Kleist is clear: 'All of Kleist fascinates me'; he is 'a writer we need now'. I hope that my thesis has demonstrated that Kleist's legacy is still very much present on the anglophone literary scene, if one only keeps an eye out for him.

John Banville, interviewed by Helen Tatlow, 16 January 2018, Dublin

Helen Tatlow: My first question: when and how did you first encounter Kleist?

John Banville: I knew Kleist's name, of course, but it didn't mean very much to me because he's practically no reputation in the English-speaking world. But many years ago when I was in my twenties I heard an interval talk on BBC Radio 3 which was a reading of Kleist's essay 'On The Marionette Theatre' and I was immensely impressed by it. By coincidence I also heard, on another Radio 3 interval [talk], a reading of Hofmannsthal's 'The Chandos Letter' and I regard these two texts as key modernist texts, even though Kleist lived long before modernism came along. They are certainly talismanic texts for me. But Kleist I thought in that little essay said as much about aesthetics as Schiller does in that very long essay about the naïve and sentimental in poetry.

HT: And I believe I heard in one of your other interviews that you then went on to the short stories and then the plays, is that right?

JB: I suppose I saw Éric Rohmer's *Die Marquise von O.* And then I started reading the stories and then I went on to the plays, and I was so impressed by first of all *The Broken Jug.* And the plays, I think, are the pinnacle of his achievement; I think *Amphitryon* is one of the great European masterpieces. I cannot understand why more women directors and actors don't do *Penthesilea.* It seems to me one of the great texts on the war of the sexes. It's as relevant today as it was in Kleist's time. It's even more relevant in these strange days we're living through. But I suppose, a name like Heinrich von Kleist… I was trying to get somebody here to adapt my novel *The Infinities* - which you know is very much akin to or tied-in to *Amphitryon* - but I remember I met the theatre director and I said, jokingly, 'Imagine on a billboard: "Banville!" "Kleist!"' I realised that she said 'yeah…' [laughs]. I did versions of *Amphitryon*, of *Penthesilea* and of *The Broken Jug*. Two of them were put on here, quite successfully, but people didn't know what to make of them. It was about half an hour into *The Broken Jug* before they realised it was a comedy.

HT: Really?

JB: Well, they saw 'Banville' and 'Kleist' and thought it was very heavy stuff. I wanted to stand up on the first night and say 'Laugh! Laugh!' It's a very very dark play but it is very funny. It's beautifully constructed. The way it swells, with one character and two characters and three characters, it swells on the stage. A beautifully made piece of work. So that was the one I adapted first, and I set it in Ireland during the Famine of 1848, just to give it extra laughs. And people eventually understood it and it had a very good run, I think it was extended for a couple of weeks, and then I did *Amphitryon*

which I called *God's Gift* and that did well also. But I don't see anybody else doing Kleist. It's a pity.

HT: There are a few but you are-

JB: Here I mean.

HT: No, not in Ireland.

JB: I think Blake Morrison did a version *of The Broken Jug*.

HT: That's right, he did. So why these three plays in particular? I read that you said you feel like they best display Kleist's greatness. What is it about *The Broken Jug*, *Amphitryon* and *Penthesilea*?

JB: They're so ambiguous. We end up feeling sort of sorry for the judge in *The Broken Jug* who is an absolute scoundrel. In *Amphitryon* the figure of Amphitryon himself is a figure of fun, but he's tragic, he's had everything stolen from him, even his name. And the cruelty and capriciousness of the gods are beautifully portrayed. And *Penthesilea* as I said I think is *the* text about the unending war between the sexes. Penthesilea keeps saying to Achilles, 'You keep on like this I'll tear your heart out', and he says 'Ah yes, of course, little girl', and she ends up tearing his heart out.

HT: I noticed that you made Achilles exceptionally… he's quite awful anyway, but I think you really brought that out in your version, and presumably that was intentional?

JB: He's a dreadful creature. Even among the Greeks he's a dreadful creature. Of course the Greeks would admire that kind of ferocity and unforgivingness.

HT: What about Odysseus in that play?

JB: Well he's just a wise old man saying 'Oh God, what is this?' This is part of Kleist's greatness: his ambiguous position: is he a classical author? Is he a Romantic author? Is he a modern author? He's like Büchner in that you just don't know where to place him. He did it all in such a short period of time, with such intensity. But he knew what he was worth, he said he would tear the laurel wreath from Goethe's brow, which I think he did. I will never forgive Goethe for that Hollywood happy ending he stuck onto *Faust*; Kleist would never have done that, although Kleist wasn't very good at endings either.

HT: I noticed that in your adaptations you tinkered with the endings slightly.

JB: Yes, I don't like his endings - I think he gets bored and he falls into convention in the endings of his plays, but the beginnings and middles are just superb.

HT: *Broken Jug* for example, your version of it, ends on a more overtly bleak note, you might say.

JB: Oh yeah.

HT: It's not all happiness and light in Kleist's version either, but I think your version makes it very clear that exploitation and corruption is going to carry on - Eve's not very happy, nobody's very happy by the end. Especially given the setting and knowing what a dark period Ireland was in at the time.

JB: I think there was a certain amount of outrage here that all the baddies are Irish and all the decent people are English. And when I was doing *Amphitryon* I so much enjoyed writing a line where Amphitryon is calling on the audience to say: 'You know me, don't you, you know who I am'. Silence, of course. A couple of performances I've been at where people have shouted, 'Yeah, we know who you are, get off!' But usually there's silence. So he then gets to say 'you awful Irish louts'. To get that line on the stage in the theatre in Dublin, that was one of my happier moments.

HT: And how did the audience react to that?

JB: Oh, they saw the joke. Irish audiences are quite sophisticated. And they certainly don't expect Irish authors to praise Ireland or be nice about Ireland.

HT: It's quite ambiguous in *The Broken Jug*, for example: you've got Irish characters, you've English characters, you've got Irish people working for English people, and it is all very ambiguous.

JB: But that is the absolute, the most apt word for Kleist, is ambiguous. You never know where you are. I'm not sure he knew himself what he was. He recognised the peculiarity and the strange ambiguity, the strange mixture of light and dark in which we live. When he finally got someone to commit suicide with him he and she were dancing about the fields, making daisy chains, just as they were about to shoot each other. So he was a driven character, as he said to his sister in that famous, one of the last letters: 'There's no help for me on earth'. And I think there wasn't. But a great genius – I hate that word 'genius', I shouldn't use it. A great artist, one of the great Europeans.

HT: Why do you hate the word 'genius'?

JB: What is a genius? When does a person who is very, very talented suddenly become a genius? There's a lovely little anecdote of an interviewer talking to Georges Braque and asking him about Picasso and saying, 'What do you think of your friend?' And Braque says 'Pablo… he used to be a good painter; now he's just a genius.' It's quite deep.

HT: I think you've said before that the way you ended up adapting Kleist was after a long attempt to get some Irish writer to do it.

JB: I wanted to put Kleist on at the theatre in Ireland. Theatre at that time was moribund in this country. Endless productions of Oscar Wilde and Seán O'Casey. And my interest always was to open up the island to outside influences. I was in the Arts Council in the early 1980s, and the only initiative I gave my time and energy to was getting bursaries for artists to travel outside the country, get out and see what's happening out there, because - not so much now, with cheap travel and so on - but in those days nobody left, nobody got off the island, we were turned in on ourselves.

HT: So were you actively talking about Kleist to people and trying to get them to do it?

JB: I saw a theatre company called Barrabas doing an old war horse of an Irish play called *The Whiteheaded Boy*. They did such a brilliant job on it that I said, 'I'm going to have to write something for you'. So I wrote *The Broken Jug* for them. It worked quite well but it would have- no, I wrote *Amphitryon* for them, and it worked quite well, but they're more of a physical-based company, they're more like pantomime and the Commedia dell'Arte, and there were too many words. And don't say I said so, but Irish actors can't do blank verse anymore, I don't know what it is. I had this feeling that only English actors can do blank verse, because they understand the rhythms, we don't - the rhythms that we have are rhythms from the Irish language. Even though we don't have the Irish language anymore, except in a few isolated places, the deep grammar of our consciousness, if you like, is based on Irish rhythms, which are entirely different. You couldn't have a more dissimilar language to English than Irish. English is the language of command, directive, direct plain speech, whereas Irish, I always think of it as a mode of evasion rather than communication. You can't say things directly in Irish - you can't say in Irish 'I am a man', you can't even say 'No', you can only say 'It is not so'. It's a beautiful language, it's a dreamy, poetical language, but English gives itself to blank verse in a way that- English sensibility gives itself to blank verse in a way that Irish sensibility doesn't.

HT: Do you speak Irish, or write in Irish ever?

JB: No. The problem was it was used as an ideological tool, when we were at school, it was forced upon us. You could get 100% in every subject, but if you failed Irish you failed the exam. So we grew up hating the language, which is a disgrace, because if they'd given it to us as a playful language, something to enjoy, we would have kept it. But again I would say that even though my family hasn't spoken Irish for at least three, probably four generations, I don't feel at home in the English language. And it's probably why I have an affinity with writers like Kleist who I don't think felt at home anywhere. It's a good position for an artist to be in, an artist who feels at home is going to write at-home work.

HT: In terms of thinking about the 1990s and the 2000s when you wrote these adaptations, and when they were performed, was there anything happening politically or culturally that you wanted to comment on?

JB: No. I don't make comments.

HT: I have noticed that in your work. This is why I find your Kleist adaptations a bit of an enigma, because having read some of your other work, I tend to find it not especially rooted in any one particular place, or about any particular political issue, or anything like that [Banville nods], whereas I felt when reading your Kleist adaptations - *The Infinities* aside, so just concentrating on the dramas - that it was interesting that you had changed the setting and moved them into a specific political situation, for *Broken Jug* and *God's Gift*.

JB: Well, *The Broken Jug* is iconoclastic. I mean the notion of an audience sitting laughing at a play which is set during the worst Irish catastrophe we've ever had, during the Famine, I liked that notion. I liked in *Amphitryon* that Amphitryon the English general is a heroic figure, a tragic figure, and the Irish are very ambiguous. If you want to say I'm making political points go ahead, but I had no desire to do that. I just wanted them for the comedy.

HT: Regarding *Love in the Wars*, you said that it's more relevant now than it was at the time, or certainly continues to have lots of relevancies in this confused world that we live in now: would you say that we can now get something from Kleist that perhaps people two hundred years ago wouldn't have gotten?

JB: I don't know. I can't comment on two hundred years ago. But certainly *Penthesilea* does seem to me to be a great feminist play, without intending to be. Penthesilea is a tragic figure, she's a male sensibility trapped in a female body, yet she's very much a woman - again Kleist's ambiguity. What is Penthesilea? Is she a savage? Is she civilised? Is she a woman? Is she a man? Is she a killer? Is she a poet? What is she? So I suppose it has a relevance to our time but I hate the word 'relevance' - I run a mile when I hear it. One of my mottos is one of Kafka's aphorisms: 'Never again psychology!' And I'm with him on that. The business of an artist is not to psychologise; the business of an artist is to give the evidence: here's what one man or one woman saw; this is a brief moment on earth; this is a brief transcript of it. It's merely evidence.

HT: That seems to play into Kleist's style and worldview.

JB: I feel an absolute affinity with Kleist.

HT: You mentioned in an interview with Hugh Haughton that sometimes you feel that you're more female than male, perhaps in your writing persona, or that you have an affinity with women. I think that's interesting in relation to all of the adaptations, not just *Love in the Wars*.

JB: My idea of hell would be a dinner party consisting entirely of men that goes on for eternity. Oh my God! I mean, men are for the most part stupid and boring, obsessed with themselves. Men never ever get over the loss of the mother. From the age of about four on they're saying, 'Where's she gone? What am I going to do now?' I have two daughters and two sons. My sons are middle-aged men, they're older than me, I think, and I see on their faces this look, which I have as well, this look of puzzlement, whereas my girls… at the age of about eleven or twelve girls look around and say, 'I see how this is done', and men hate them for it. Men immediately have to keep them down. You look at any playground for education and school and girls will be getting it from the boys. And my wife, who is a teacher, says it's fascinating because she used to teach classes of children aged 10, 11 and 12, and she said it was fascinating to watch the way the girls, clever girls, when they got to about 11, would say, 'Being clever's not going to get me anywhere. I'm going to start pretending to be stupid.' And I think

that's true. I think that women have been told that they're creatures of intuition, which they are, but what's wrong with being intuitive? I wish men had more intuition.

HT: Do you see it as something fundamentally different in the male and female personalities?

JB: Oh absolutely, absolutely. I've never gotten used to there being women on earth. I think this is a place made for men. It's cruel and savage and stupid, but it's also exquisitely beautiful, which is where the women come in. But most men probably regard me as a complete sissy, always mooning after women. I know many men who just tolerate women, whereas I find women infinitely interesting, they've always fascinated me, and I fall in love two or three times a week, still. That's just a personal thing; I'm sure it's in the books as well. I mean Helen in *The Infinities* I think is a wonderful character. I'm going to write about her again. I'm going to do some sort of a sequel to *The Infinities* because I don't want to let her go. I was very lucky in the women I've known in my life, my mother onwards. In *Penthesilea* you can see that Kleist understands women and their predicament.

HT: I'd be interested to know why you decided to change the titles of *Amphitryon* and *Penthesilea*.

JB: People couldn't pronounce them, for a start. But also I wanted to get people into the theatre. I don't like naturalistic theatre. I can't sit through ten minutes of an Arthur Miller play - I can see it's good and so on but I keep waiting for the scenery to fall down and the leading lady's knickers to fall off and the hero to fall flat on his face. I never believe in it. To me, theatre is pantomime. My great ambition is to write a pantomime. I want to write a pantomime. It's an amazing form because it's always taking place on two levels, with the jokes aimed at the adults and the jokes aimed at the children. Technically that's a wonderful challenge. I might do it someday. But I wanted people to come to these plays and enjoy them. That's the first thing. All art is entertainment. You go to a tragedy by Sophocles to be entertained. To be delighted. We may be weeping but we're also saying, 'God, this is wonderful.' So changing the titles - if somebody in Ireland saw on the billboard '*Penthesilea*, a play by Heinrich von Kleist adapted by John Banville', nobody would go.

HT: Were you adapting for a particular audience?

JB: Yes, I was adapting for an audience here.

HT: Was there anything in your writing that changed because of that? Adding more humour, perhaps? They are very funny, there are a lot of jokes.

JB: Yeah, and there are a lot of crude jokes. But I think Kleist himself was quite crude, he recognised - he was vulgar in the best sense of the term - he was of the people, he tried to be, and I try to be as well. I mean people needn't think I live in an ivory tower - I want to be popular, but unfortunately I've got a reputation for ivory-towerism. The best two reviews I've had – I don't read reviews – the best two I've ever had, for *The Book of Evidence*, published in 1989 and shortlisted for the Booker Prize, when I was

famous for two-and-a-half minutes, I was walking down the street one day and a workman was passing by, on his bike, guy in working clothes, saw me, swerved to come to me, and I was thinking, 'God, I'm going to be attacked!' And he swerved to me and said, 'Great fucking book!' And I thought: 'That is the best review I will ever ever have'. And the other one was more recent: my wife was shopping in Marks and Spencer, and the woman at the checkout looked at her card and said, 'Are you related to John Banville? Tell him, *The Sea* is the most beautiful thing I've ever read.' I don't write for reviewers, I don't write for academics, I don't write to win prizes; I write in the hope that the woman at the checkout will be touched, will be delighted, will be transported. That's what art is for. It has no other purpose than to make you feel more vividly alive. It carries no message, it's not going to change the world, it's not going to stop the Israelis fighting the Palestinians, it's not going to stop Donald Trump tweeting. Auden is right: poetry makes nothing happen. You can apply that to all the arts. But making nothing happen is in itself a positive thing, because art is completely inutile, it's not useful for anything, we can't use it. If you politicise it, it becomes bad art. Orwell's a wonderful thinker, but when he writes fiction... as a novel *1984* is just awful. As a political text, of course, it's very powerful.

So I've no interest in doing that kind of thing, but I do have an interest in vivifying life. My grandson is nine and he's really begun to read in a big way, and you hand him a book and he's, you know… it's a wonderful phenomenon, just to see a human being translating black marks on a white page into ideas, images, dreams, it's an extraordinary phenomenon. The same is true of music, the same is true of painting, the same is true even of dance, although I'm not very good on dance.

HT: Primarily you're known as a novelist. Do you think that affected, in any way that you can put your finger on, how you adapted Kleist's plays?

JB: I never think of myself as a novelist. The novel was invented by the English and the Russians in the nineteenth century; what we call the novel is essentially Russian and English. And this is why American mainstream fiction was, and at least until recently is, so strong: it has a great theme, which is the building of a nation. The American novelist is always interrogating himself and the country and the people, the nation. We're not doing that anymore, we've gone past that, and what Henry James does in the version of modernism that he initiated was the poeticisation of the novel. My friend used to say that there's verse and there's prose and there's poetry, and poetry can happen in either [verse or prose], and since he was a novelist he'd say it happens more often in a novel than it does in verse. I think that's true, so what I try to do with my books- and I think Kleist was like this as well, he tried to infuse a demotic form, vulgar form, vulgar again in the best sense- to sit in a theatre and see an audience rocking with laughter at a dream being played out on stage is a wonderful thing, even better to see them weeping, but to see them reacting to what's happening on stage, that's a marvellous thing. Fiction of course is entirely different, it's a solitary pastime. There's nothing more boring than readings. Novels are meant to be read in solitude, they're meant to be revelled in in solitude. Kleist tried to put that poetic intensity on stage but

he was vulgar enough to realise that it had to be done in a way that would get audiences in, sitting there and concentrating on the stage.

HT: Speaking of intensity: let's take the example of *Love in the Wars*. In the final scene of *Penthesilea*, she kills herself by sheer force of will - there's a lot of metaphor in the whole play, in Kleist's work in general. There's a lot of metaphor and imagery in your oeuvre in general, but I sensed as I was reading Kleist's plays and your versions side by side that you'd removed quite a lot of that language. [Banville nods] I am interested to know why that is the case.

JB: Well, I see Kleist's plays as very hard-edged, he was living in the Romantic era and he was surrounded by Romantic language, by rhetoric, the rhetorical stance. But that wasn't natural to him, I think. He was a peculiar mixture of realist and poet - not that poetry's not realistic but you know what I mean. His plays: even at their most outrageous they're plausible. I love in *The Broken Jug* that the whole thing turns on a lady bringing a court case about a broken jug - all this elaborate, farcical, tragical, ugly, horrible drama is based on this absurd little premise. That's why I ended mine with her saying, 'Here, what about my broken jug?!', which worked very well in the theatre. The couple of times I've seen it they did it with a slight lowering of the lights as if it were finished, but then she stands up in a very strong spotlight which just emphasises the absurdity of the whole thing.

HT: Did anything surprise you about seeing the plays actually staged?

JB: I love seeing it, it's extraordinary. The thing I enjoyed most was the first read-through of *The Broken Jug*, which was in a cold room in some backstreet, and to see my words being literally personified, flesh-and-blood people speaking lines I'd written, that's wonderful, especially for a novelist because fiction-writing is such a solitary experience.

HT: In terms of the process of you writing these adaptations, were you working from the German, using other translations?

JB: I was using all kinds of cribs. I have a tiny smattering of German. We were talking about the Irish language earlier. In German the sentence ends with the verb; in Irish the sentence begins with the verb. Diametric. There's a wonderful cartoon I saw in a German newspaper years ago. One man is strangling another. The man who's doing the strangling is absolutely furious. The man who's being strangled is perfectly calm, and the caption is: 'He's waiting for the verb.'

HT: Thinking about Kleist in your other work, I hope you would agree that there's a pretty strong presence of Kleist across your oeuvre.

JB: There is.

HT: There are direct references, but also ideas. Do you feel like he has affected you as a writer?

JB: I don't know that we're influenced by other writers; we imitate them, because of the defectiveness of our own technique. But Kleist would be one of my heroes. I don't have many. But he would be one of them. A life that was given almost absolutely to art is admirable. I wish he'd lived longer. But maybe he had done his work. I can't imagine that he would have done any better than *Amphitryon*, but maybe he would. I mean, Shakespeare lived too long.

HT: Do you think?

JB: Oh yeah, we could do without *Lear*. Great poetry, but a messy play. But I wouldn't be without *The Tempest*.

HT: In your work there's a lot of discussion about identity, ghosts, and quite strong parallels with *Amphitryon*. If we think of *Eclipse*, for example, there are strong *Amphitryon* ties there as well.

JB: I've always been fascinated by the notion of the double, the twin. And in *Amphitryon*, it's so cleverly done. Again, as I say, he's basing it on ancient models, but it's so cleverly brought off, the way in which people keep coming in and going. When we did it here [laughs] the gods were wearing nothing but elaborate babies' nappies. But they would come on and the characters would say, 'Amphitryon!', 'Yes, I am Amphitryon'. Again I come back to the word 'ambiguity'. It seems to me that ambiguity is the essence of Kleist, we never know where we are. You live with someone for 40 years, one day they say something, a chance remark, and you realise, 'I don't know anything about this person. And the things I know have to be adjusted now because she's said that.' It doesn't have to be some profound thing, just a view of the world you realise that you didn't realise before that she or he had. That's wonderful, that's what makes life constantly changing. Ovid was right, we live in a state of metamorphosis. Kleist saw this very clearly. We are not singular, we're not monads. This ancient notion of the soul, this pilot light constantly burning. There's no pilot light. We make it up at every moment. We're different people every waking moment of the day, every sleeping moment of the day as well. Which is wonderful. God forbid, if we were all the same all the time it would be a world of robots. That's what we'll have over the robots, when they're immensely sophisticated in two or three generations from now. Human beings will still be there because we're irresponsible, because we're not unitary. We're chaotic. We're anarchic. Which is what it is to be human. And Kleist saw that.

HT: When you revisited *Amphitryon* from *God's Gift* to *The Infinities*, had your understanding of it changed at all? Obviously you find that work particularly interesting – but why revisit it?

JB: I can't answer that, I don't know – why do we do things? If I could I would, I'm not being evasive, I just don't know. Obviously it's a play and a theme that has haunted me from the start. In my first novel, I think, the main character was a twin. In my second novel the main character is fighting, at war with his double. For a long time I had the notion that I was the only one who imagined that I was a surviving twin, but apparently

it's a fantasy of a great many people. It's obvious when you think about it, you feel incomplete. We're always looking for our other half - as Ovid says, it's the greatest explanation of sex I've ever come across. We're looking for that other person literally to lock with, to be one. And you do that, it lasts for about three weeks and then you realise you're not one.

HT: Did you expect readers of *The Infinities* to realise that it was anything to do with Kleist?

JB: I don't expect people to get references. I do think that if you put a reference in, if you put a quote in, and you don't attribute it, it gives a kind of resonance, it's like shaking a spider's web, or touching the string of an instrument, there's a vibration in it. It's a barely heard vibration. Art is made of all kinds of things, it's thrown together. No matter how finished and polished a work of art looks, it's made up of bits and scraps, leftover bits of food. Art is not a pure medium and thank God it's not. There's a lovely story of Joyce in a restaurant in Paris, and a young man came in and knelt by the table and said, 'Mr Joyce, may I kiss the hand that wrote *Ulysses*?' and Joyce said, 'Yes, but remember, it's done a lot of other things as well.' [laughs]

HT: So have you got any other Kleist adaptations on the horizon?

JB: No.

HT: I'm excited to hear you are thinking about an *Infinities* sequel.

JB: I'm going to do a sequel to *The Book of Evidence*, which is about a murderer, and he's going to get out of jail. And he has got out of jail: I based it on a real case and the guy is out of jail, he comes to my readings, this murderer I see him sitting in the back, so I'm going to write a book about him coming out of jail and he meets Helen. And then he meets the son of… then he meets Adam Godley's biographer. Beyond that I don't know. I haven't started it yet. I was going to call it *Dark Matter*, but I think *Dark Matter*'s now becoming a cliché. A friend of mine said I should call it *Out of True,* which is a wonderful title, but I said no - I'm going to keep that for my autobiography. I have this ambition to write my autobiography in which everything is slightly wrong. I'll say I had two brothers, instead of which I had a brother and a sister, and I'll do interviews where I'll say, 'No, you've got it wrong, Wikipedia is wrong, this is the truth'. And people would say, 'What?!' And I'd say, 'Do you think I'd lie to you?' [laughs] Just slightly off.

HT: A bit like *The Infinities*, where everything is not exactly like you'd expect it to be.

JB: Yes. I remember my friend Neil Jordan saying to me, 'Jesus, you've written a science fiction novel that has no science fiction in it!' It's just in an ordinary world. And yet the cars run on salt water and the gods are there. I never thought it was magic realism; I thought it was realism. *The Infinities* seems to be a portrait of how the world is.

I remember walking my dog years ago in the fields where we lived. And I was walking through a small ditch, with a hill on one side and the field on the other. It was a

perfectly calm day, and suddenly a wind just blew through and I thought, 'A god is on his way somewhere'. I'm not religious but I believe that we invent gods. The worst thing that ever happened to us as a species was to invent monotheism. We should go back to paganism. Paganism is wonderful; there's a god for everything. You stub your toe on a stone – 'Oh, the god made me do that.' If you fall in love – 'Oh, it's Cupid, it's Venus.' That was a wonderful system. That was the genius of the ancient Greeks. To devise a system that could account for everything, without the notion of - all you got was you might get to the land of the shades, where nobody wanted to get to anything. It was with the invention of monotheism that we began to despise the world. Everything is *going* to come. This mere time we have on Earth will be nothing, it's all *coming*. Look at some parts of Islam at the moment, the madness that's taken over, this cult of death, whereas *this* is all we have. I know someone who's a perfectly sensible woman, but she has this mad notion that Christ is her best friend. I remember having an argument, a discussion with her, when I said, 'Why do you want this? What do you want to go on? *This* is heaven, *this* is hell. There's nobody waiting for you up there. Besides, if there is a heaven, don't forget that that girl who bullied you in the schoolyard, she's going to be up there with you. And your aunt Mary, who used to beat you with a hairbrush, she's going to be up there as well, and there's all these boring, boring people.' When I was a child the thing that terrified me was the notion of heaven. Hell I could cope with, but heaven seems to me just an unbearable notion, being nice forever. There's a wonderful quatrain, written by an anonymous writer: 'In Heaven there'll be no algebra,/ No learning dates and names,/ Just playing all day on golden harps,/ And reading Henry James.'

APPENDIX B

David Constantine, interviewed by Helen Tatlow, 12 December 2018, via email

Helen Tatlow: When/how did you first encounter Kleist? Was there anything in that first encounter that particularly struck you about his work?

David Constantine: I read him as an undergraduate. My tutor was Denys Dyer who had written a lively book on the stories. I think all our class got to like Kleist then – at first for his endearing oddity.

HT: What is your impression of Kleist's status outside of the German-speaking world, and, in particular, within the anglophone world (currently and at the time of your translation's publication)? More broadly, what is your impression of the status of German literature within the anglophone world?

DC: Sorry, I've no idea. And the way things are now in our Brexit land and after years of reducing the teaching of foreign languages in our state schools the status of German literature in this particular unhappy bit of the Anglophone world is, I guess, low.

HT: When did you start translating Kleist? Whose idea was it to publish a Kleist collection? How did the publication of the Kleist translations come about?

I began translating him in earnest for the Dent volume which came out in 1997. Dent were intending to do a series of translations of German literature with T. J. Reed as General Editor but I believe only two ever came out, mine being the second.

HT: Why did you want to translate Kleist?

DC: Jim Reed invited me to. But I accepted the invitation because Kleist is a quite peculiarly attractive and disturbing writer. I had been teaching him to undergraduates since 1970 and I was glad of a chance to try to 'English' him.

HT: How did you decide which texts to translate for your Kleist collection? Do any of Kleist's texts speak to you more than others? If so, which and how/why?

DC: All of Kleist fascinates me, but for the Dent volume I had to make a selection. I wanted all the stories to be in, because from them you could, so to speak, read out into everything else, in other translations or, better, in his German. The essays and the few letters I included are also a great help in the reading of the fiction and the drama.

HT: Were/are there any texts you wish you could have included? Have you translated any of Kleist's texts without including them in the published collection?

DC: I wished I'd translated and included *Penthesilea* and can't now remember why I didn't. I don't think it was a matter of available space. That play has been important to me as an instance of how bit by bit a terrifying truth is brought home. Seems to me that

the purpose of fiction and poetry is to bring the truth, however unpalatable, home. (I wrote about this in Oxford German Studies, 33, 2004.)

HT: Which texts did you start with?

DC: The stories.

HT: What was your process when translating Kleist?

DC: I had his text and my notebooks and I translated him longhand in among the drafts of my own poems and stories. I worked at home, in Wales, in Scilly, on trains and boats and planes, in cafés, railway stations, airports and in all manner of hotels and B & B's in Britain and 'Europe'. When each text was finished longhand I typed it up, and that was my first revision of it.

HT: Were there any particular themes you wanted to emphasise in any of the translations?

DC: I translated the text as closely as I could, so the sense of it and its 'emphases' were, I hoped, according to my understanding, Kleist's.

HT: How aware were/are you of other English-language translations/adaptations of Kleist? Did you consult any other translations while writing your own?

DC: I was aware of the translations I mentioned in my Select Bibliography, and I read reviews of Blake Morrison's version of *Der zerbrochne Krug* (*The Cracked Pot*, 1995). I don't consult other translations while I'm working at my own. I might, or I might ask a friend or a colleague, when I've got the shape and spirit of mine in English as well as I can. Particular lexical difficulties are an important matter, of course, and I don't want to make mistakes; but first must come the shape, rhythm and spirit of the thing.

HT: You say in the collection's 'Note on the Translation' that Kleist's style is 'pre-eminently his syntax' and that you were aiming at 'an English haunted and affected by the strangeness of the original'. Could you explain further how you sought to put this across in your translations?

DC: Many years before translating Kleist I read Emil Staiger's essay on 'Das Bettelweib von Locarno' (in the volume Meisterwerke deutscher Sprache) in which he insists that how the story is told counts for more than the matter (Stoff) itself. And as I said in my note, Kleist's syntax, largely hypotactic, is the chief means by which the story's sense, its effect on our intelligence and our feelings, is engendered and conveyed. So I had to cleave as close as English would allow to that difficult and intricately testing syntax and on no account make it easier, less strange, for the reader in English than it is for the reader in German. Same goes for translating Hölderlin.

HT: Did anything surprise you during or about this particular translation process?

DC: A writer as good as Kleist is a continual surprise.

HT: Do you read Kleist differently after having translated his work?

DC: Not differently – but with, I hope, a better understanding, and certainly with an even greater enjoyment and admiration.

HT: How do you view these translations with regard to the service-autonomy dynamic that you have previously mentioned?

DC: That quarrel or dynamic is more intense in the translating of poetry but it is certainly there also in the case of a writer as eccentric as Kleist.

HT: Is the relevance of an older/foreign text to our current context something that you actively consider when translating?

DC: No. Great works reach out of their own time and touch us now. As a translator, I wanted to help the life of the foreign text over the frontiers of language, space and time. Kleist thought the world he lived in very precarious. His writing – his syntax – demonstrates both that precariousness and our need for some abiding stay. He strives to make sense, to hold a world together. That seems to me a very modern enterprise.

HT: Was there something happening on the British or world political or cultural scene at the time that made you think that 1997 was an apt time to translate and publish Kleist?

DC: No. I was invited. But – see above – he is, like Büchner and Hölderlin, a writer we need now.

HT: What do you consider to be the particular resonances of Kleist's work for the anglophone world/Britain today?

DC: Our world (like Lear's) feels close to chaos much of the time.

HT: What is it about the Romantic period that so appeals to you? Is there something about their preoccupations that particularly resonates within our current context?

DC: Their large hopes and grievous disappointment, 1789-1815. Already – in Hölderlin, Wordsworth, Blake, Clare – the fear of our ruining the natural world and of the mechanization and commodification of human life. Belief in 'the truth of imagination and the holiness of the heart's affections' (Keats).

HT: Did you write your translations to appeal to a certain audience, or with any particular purpose in mind? (e.g. to appeal specifically to a British audience, primarily to be read, for an academic audience, for performance, to widen Kleist's audience amongst general readers)

DC: No.

HT: Are you aware of any instances of your Kleist drama translations being used in performance?

DC: No.

HT: When you translate, or write about translation, do you actively think about translation theory?

DC: No. But I suppose I'm of the camp that doesn't wish to domesticate the foreign work nor as translator to become invisible.

HT: (How) Do you think translating/reading Kleist has affected your other writing, thematically and/or stylistically?

DC: Translating Kleist (and Hölderlin) made me acutely aware of the power of syntax, of the sentence making its sense as its proceeds.

HT: Outside of your translation work, you are perhaps especially known as a poet and short-story writer. Do you think that identity affects your translations? - especially, for example, when translating drama?

DC: A writer who translates (poetry, fiction or drama) is always, however much he or she loves and respects the foreign text, asking 'What's in this for me? What can I learn about my own language as I translate this foreign writer?'

HT: Reference to other texts/writers is a feature of your work (e.g. in the short story 'Romantic'). What is the appeal of intertextuality for you?

DC: I borrowed Kleist's sudden insight into the nature of the arch – that it holds up because all of its parts are trying to fall down (letter to Wilhelmine, 16-30 November 1800) – for the suicidal character in my story 'An Island'. Such things are points of reference and illustrative instances for me and it doesn't matter in the least whether they are for the readers of my poems or stories. All that matters is that they work in the new context into which I have put them.

HT: You have mentioned that you are 'fascinated by what literalness will do' in translation, while you describe your own method predominantly as 'attempting to reproduce the original's effects by means proper to my own language' (from your interview for Oxford Poetry [http://www.oxfordpoetry.co.uk/interviews.php?int=iii2_davidconstantine]). Have you considered writing/publishing translations that move towards literalness, particularly with regard to syntax, to such an extent that they push English beyond what might typically be said to be 'proper'?

DC: Literalness fascinates me largely because of Hölderlin: his word-for-word - indeed syllable-for-syllable - versions of Pindar's victory odes. He learned his own poetic language in the course of that exercise. I've worked like that myself, but mostly for my own possible benefit. Translating Hölderlin's Sophocles translations I think I pushed my English into something pretty strange and I did publish those (with Bloodaxe). Still his German is stranger. It's worth bearing in mind that all poetic language is more or less 'foreign', sounds as though it has come through translation from elsewhere. Robert Graves calls it 'Otherwhereish'.

HT: Do you have any other Kleist projects on the horizon?

DC: No. But I shall always read him.

David Constantine, interviewed by Helen Tatlow, 28 January 2019, Oxford

Helen Tatlow: You've said that Kleist's style is in his syntax, and you mentioned in your written answers to the interview questions - I'll see if I can quote you correctly - that your aim was to write English 'as close as English would allow to that difficult and intricately testing syntax'. I was wondering if you could expand on that a little bit more; how you decided, if you're able to explain, what counted as what 'English would allow', because I'm sure there must have been points where a certain choice had to be made: 'I'm pushing it but not too far'.

David Constantine: Yes, that's right. The first point really is that if you only viewed the sentence as a means by which to convey information, then you could break down the opening sentence of 'Der Zweikampf' into, I don't know, six or eight small sentences, and you would have done justice to the informational content of it. And that's clearly not what it's all about, and you can deduce from that that what matters almost more than the informational content or even the emotional content, at times, what matters more than that, or at least as much as that, is the sentence in which it's delivered, because it's axiomatic that reading a hypotactic sentence like those - and this isn't a value judgement at all - is different from reading the kind of sentences that you get in the *New Testament*. It's a different reading experience. One is not better than the other, but I have friend called Phil Davis who for a while at least was very interested in what happens in the brain when we're reading, and it's obvious, even without scientific enquiry, that the brain is being tested and affected in different ways if you are entering upon a sentence and having to defer the point at which the sense of it falls into place, because the mind is keeping open the possibilities. Whereas in the very simple sentences of the *New Testament*, it's parataxis. It's very beautiful, I love that sort of writing as well, but it has a completely different effect on the reading mind.

One big difference between German and English obviously is that you could say that the German reader is more used to waiting for sense to fall into place because they send the verbs to the end of a subordinate clause. It's like predictive texting: you may well know what's coming, or the options start to close, but actually until the verb falls into place, then the sense isn't clinched. And that's an important thing. And just to digress slightly sideways, translating Hölderlin that happens the whole time, because his sentences can… in the poem 'Heimkunft' there's a sentence there that goes over 16 or 18 lines. You're not deferring sense totally until the last, because there are various clauses that do complete, but immediately another one is begun out of it, so you are ranging outwards, in the sense that you are embracing more as you proceed. And in fact in his [Hölderlin's] case in the making of the lines of verse it's very interesting, he would pile up three or four epithets before the noun and leave them all there, until in

the end he would cross - he wouldn't cross them all out, they're still there, an editor has made a choice, but that's the kind of mind which is keeping options open or possibilities open. And this isn't really a digression because the kind of prose Kleist writes is the same. People who are not interested in this think: 'Well, he could have put this, or he could have put that, so why bother so much?' But actually it's axiomatic in very good writing that - and I'm truly speaking even the movement of a comma, or changing a comma into a semicolon, let alone changing one epithet into another - it has repercussions throughout the text.

You can't actually feel all this. Sometimes you can, because the meaning is minutely altered, perhaps infinitesimally altered, but altered, and it's a bit akin to Eliot saying that the sum corpus of literature to date is minutely altered, that is all the relations within it are altered, any time a new great work enters the canon, because there's an adjustment. Now again you can't really feel it, and I've said this before, he and I wouldn't agree as to what is the canon, but nevertheless a new work entering [does make an alteration], because quite often new works do actually take cognisance of what's there, so relations are being shifted. And in a Kleist sentence that's happening the whole time, these parts of it, the strain actually, of reading is an integral part of your sense of him. I mentioned that essay by Emil Staiger where he says it's a structure of sense, and I think really it's a structure of feeling, which is physically made up of all these building blocks, which are also lexical items, they mean something.

When I was translating, it seemed to me, particularly with sentences like [the first sentence of 'Der Zweikampf'], it was up to me first of all, rather than going for the *mot juste*, to get a structure in place with words in it - obviously it's made up of words, we mustn't forget that - to get words which in the end were not going to be quite the right words, but that were the building blocks of a structure, an effort to get at an equal tension to that which is there in the original, in the German.

Now you can't do it exactly because English and German don't work in the same way. Again, it's very similar to Hölderlin: once I'd understood the prime mover of a Hölderlin sentence, that the effect of it, that he intended, I've no doubt, and certainly the effect on the reader, is tension and then release when it falls into place. I'm not a musician, but it's that point when things are resolved. So if you said to yourself, as I did, what I've got to get across with this is, clearly the sense of the words, but I've also somehow got to convey what the reading experience is like. You can't start talking about form and content: it's a lunatic division; it's completely barmy. The reading experience in its entirety, these extraordinarily resonant words, and far-ranging words with lots and lots of connotations, that's embedded in a structure which is doing something to you around the heart, there's no doubt about this, and certainly in the head, which you must in some way try to recreate in a foreign tongue.

Michael Hamburger translated Hölderlin. I was quite good friends with him and he spoke of himself as a mimetic translator, he would imitate exactly the positioning of the words in the sentence. I thought I don't want to do that, because it results in something which is just antiquarian. There's an awful lot of apostrophe in Hölderlin, 'O this' and

'O that' to various abstractions - in his case they're not really abstractions, they're very physical. Michael imitated those. I can't do that, because I've read quite a bit of the kind of language that for example, German Romantic poetry gets translated into in English and is used in American high schools as their text, and if you read that you just think 'Well, why would I bother? This absolutely does not touch me.' If you write in the twenty-first century, and the text is from the age of Shelley, you can't say, 'I'll write like Shelley', because Shelley writing as Shelley then is a totally different kettle of fish to you archaising a language which is kind of "Shelleyian".

So you can't do that, it's a dead end, and you just lose it. You might as well not bother because the effect of the text is zero, really, or just a sort of wondering: 'Why is he giving me this to read?'

It's complicated but as long as you've understood that the languages are kindred languages, they're both Germanic languages but they're very different, not just in the grammar, I mean even the simple matter of how you scan a German line or an English one, they both scan by stress, unlike French which is syllabic and unlike Latin and Greek which is length of syllable. I wanted to give myself a discipline as strict as his, as Hölderlin's, so I did it syllabically, I counted syllables and there's a different number of syllables for each verse form, and I limited myself very strictly to that.

Now that might seem a long way away from Kleist but it's not actually, because the Kleistian long sentences, the hypotactic sentences - you have to convey what you've understood to be the drive of it, and the drive of it is tension. And in Kleist's case particularly - and this isn't I think far-fetched - it's somebody constructing a structure which he knows is by dint of huge effort and is only just held in place. This is the famous thing about the keystone, you know, the whole thing actually wants to collapse, so the impetus of the structure is to fall, and it's held in place by a stone, by a device, if you like. So it's that combination in his case, and it's a bit the same in Hölderlin because he's very near to collapse a lot of the time. I mean the effort of it is manifest. But in Kleist we know what he did - I mean Hölderlin went mad and Kleist shot himself, so it's not a good outcome in either direction - but you are talking about a writer who is functioning under colossal strain. And particularly in Kleist's case that is really how he views the world, and by world I mean the philosophical or religious understandings of the world open to you. He came to the conclusion that it is 'zerbrechlich'. 'Zerbrechlich' that's one of the excuses for people, people get forgiven because the world is 'zerbrechlich'. And you can't expect perfection in a world like that.

Now unless you're getting across that feeling of terrific effort and always being on the border of collapse- I didn't manage it but that was the intention; I understood what I was trying to do. What you absolutely can't do is ever flatten it or just get across what the stuff it is that somebody is saying to somebody else, because the contortions are very severe in German. Again you won't be able to replicate those exactly, otherwise it's just foolish, nobody will take you seriously.

Hölderlin, when he translated Pindar as a way of getting into his own language, he did this - there are 2500 lines of verse, which he did in fair copy, that's to say he did it and he did it again, with no intention of publishing it, and he did it not just word by word but syllable by syllable: Pindar, out of Greek into his German. So where Pindar breaks a word at the end of a line, then he broke it as well, as far as he could break up the German. So you get something which for most of the time is unintelligible without the Greek. But every now and then it hits on something where there's a consonance between the two languages and it's spectacularly beautiful and very, very strange. And in fact the beauty comes from the severe shifting of the language into something where it's not been before, where it is intelligible. Robert Graves said the language of poetry is Otherwhereish - 'I the ambassador of Otherwhere' - it's the Otherwhereish language. So the language of poetry is very often akin to, in fact you could almost say it is the language of translation, because it's coming from elsewhere. So that strangeness, anything you do that reduces it is bad; on the other hand, anything you do that pushes it into such strangeness that people are just going to say 'Well, that means nothing to me because I don't understand where the words go'. I'm not talking about a happy medium really, I'm talking about going as far as you can in it, to the edge of it not just becoming uncouth, barbaric and unintelligible.

I felt quite often I just hadn't been radical enough, and perhaps people could have taken a bit more. But that's the whole effort of it, in the stories and the little anecdotes and then the verse plays. The verse plays are even more intriguing in that way, because you've got dialogue which is a means of communication - to and fro, to and fro - but a lot of it is 'aneinandervorbeireden'. So you need your own native tongue to do something which is getting across that. That means that you can't begin to understand it only when you start to translate. You must be careful about that; you must have read enough of it often enough to understand what the spirit of it is and what the difficulties of it are and what the nature of it is altogether really. And then you can start and then as you proceed with the translation then you start to see - I mean, it really is the closest form of close reading, because you then begin to understand just how odd this is and how beautiful this is and what the ways to its beauty are and 'What can I do about it as a writer of English?' So that really when you translate it's the same as when you try to write a poem, whether you're conscious of this or not, you have access to the sum total of your reading and writing experience to date. It's a bit like saying what I just said before: the whole corpus of literature shifts. Really, it's in you somewhere, and you hope that it floats to the surface when asked, and you know, quite often it does, actually.

Now, you don't get there from nowhere, you get there by having done it for a whole load of [time]. I don't mean there are no wonderful poets at the age of sixteen, there are, but particularly in my case it's just keeping on and on and on, and reading and reading and reading. This is irrelevant but there's a whole debate at the moment really about whether people need a tradition at all. Because if you're coming from (not just) the female perspective, and you look at this male canon… if you're black or if you're Asian or if you're Japanese and you're reading here in England, you think, 'Do I need

all this?' It's very topical at the minute because there's a huge boom in the sales of poetry, and it's very young people who are doing terribly well through social media sending all of this stuff out and it's being offered as an antidote to the pack of lies and junk that you get from the politicians the whole time. But quite a lot of them feel 'It starts with me - the tradition starts here'. Well, it doesn't actually. And you don't want to say well you've got to read all this before you start, you absolutely haven't, it's exceedingly endearing and a good thing that you should just plunge in and think 'This is where it starts', but a couple of books on you should be thinking 'There is all this stuff at the back, and I may hate it but I ought to know about it because I can learn from it'. And the present editor of *Modern Poetry in Translation* Clare Pollard is a good instance of that, because she was quite successful with her first book- she's not a linguist, but her second book was a version of Ovid's *Heroides* from a feminist perspective - spot on, because she'd gone back, she read Hughes' versions of it, it's a man doing a woman's voice. This is a woman now impersonating a male poet writing about women, but that's somebody who saw the need- 'I need to know about this, I can learn from this'. And I felt that way. You know, I'm slightly getting off the point, but I felt that way, I've always only ever really translated authors that I thought in a kind of back-of-the-mind, selfish fashion: 'What's in this for me?' You're bound to do that really if you write. I'm not neutral and I have a self in it - I have an interest in it, and I've gained enormously with Hölderlin, Brecht, Goethe and Kleist - those mainly but others a bit, because it teaches you what you can do. Hölderlin spoke about it as going abroad as a journeyman for seven years like they used to have to, and then you learn the craft. And then you come home, you have to come home, but you come home with the knowledge that you got abroad. And then he says as long as you do come back: it is possible to sort of wander off into this where you begin to lose your own language. You don't want to end up writing like Kleist, you absolutely can't, you don't want to end up writing like anybody apart from me, you really don't. When you start you're drawn into all sorts of possibilities in your own tongue and then you read somebody else who's completely astonishing and then you start writing like that for a bit, but actually you're always pushing to develop and just make your own language capable of more. Now it's true the older you get you're losing stuff the whole time, you know - but you can keep on reading, and he was terribly important to me in that respect, actually. Sorry, that's far too much.

HT: No, it's absolutely fascinating, and I'm really struck with everything you say about it.

DC: You will understand that because that's what you're doing. The idea that you could make a structure that is not just semantic sense, and you then fiddle around with it and you go over it again and again. And of course you want to get the right word, but you're then replacing a word which is a kind of "holding the thing up" by a word which is the *mot juste* but will also hold it up. Because quite often it's in a particular place in a particular sentence, and if you moved it... This is unintelligible I imagine to anybody like Gove, or Johnson, the idea that it matters where you put these fucking words would just be- but to somebody who does it, and that's why it's so painful listening to

gobshite the whole time, you know, day in, day out, day in, day out, from a variety of sources. And not just politics but all the commodification of people, it's a huge debasing of the tongue and it matters because the quality of your thinking - Orwell said this and he's absolutely right - the quality of your thinking is in large measure governed by the quality of the language you have at your disposal. As he said, if you get sloppy with language you get sloppy with thinking, and sloppy thinking and blurred thinking becomes very easily mendacious without you even noticing it half the time, so that lying is not even your second nature, it's your first nature. So it matters. Even if the subject of the story or the subject of the poem is not 'I must tell the truth'. And again it's quite hard for people who don't write to understand that what you think you're up to the whole time you're writing fiction is truth. So when Trump goes on about alternative facts and all that- I wrote an essay after that about fiction in the age of alternative facts, because you are telling the truth but you're making it up. And you're filching bits from all over the place, particularly in the stories, you lift a bit here and you lift a bit there and you're writing about people that you know and love and yet it's not them, but you're just lifting this out of her life, his life, your life, and then you make something which has its own criteria for being true. You don't actually know when you start where quite you're going, and your feeling for truth is like somebody just wandering off the compass point. Because I've done quite a bit of walking where you do dead reckoning in a mist, you've got to get it right, you can just see thirty yards and then you go another thirty yards. I don't have a very good sense of direction, actually, but when I'm writing I think I've got a fair- you start wandering off, and it's wrong and you might go too far and a minute deviation on the compass at that point, by the time you've gone a mile you're way off. So the further you go in a piece of writing when you're actually going wrong and you're not telling the truth, and by that I mean that you have not either fully understood or you are not keeping to the commission in hand because it's easier that way, then it's quite a long way back but you do have to go all the way back.

Kleist is a writer who is interested in telling the truth about the world in these extraordinary ways. Odd stories altogether, and they are characters who are kind of sympathetic to him because they're terribly near the edge the whole time, most of them, obviously, they're always going towards the collapse, aren't they? It's like that bit in *Dantons Tod* - 'die Erde ist eine dünne Kruste' - as the character wanders across, stepping very gently, thinking he's going to fall through it any minute, and that's very Kleistian, isn't it? So you can see in his case the writing is an effort to hold it all together, really; it's very serious and yet it's very funny, a lot of it.

HT: Yes, true.

DC: Like Beckett.

HT: I'm interested to talk more about your actual process when you were translating. It's interesting you've just mentioned that you're thinking about the structure first and foremost. In terms of how that physically transpired on the page-

DC: With Kleist I read the sentence, and I read it again, and I read it again and again until I'd got the [sense of it] - and then I wrote an English sentence with enough in my head of what was in the German as I could retain, but writing a sentence with the feel of these various tensions in it. And then of course I checked, and there were bits I'd missed out or needed to be different, so I was trying to imbibe the sentence or at least the longest bit of it that you could retain. It's particularly the case with Kleist and Hölderlin, you can't do the first word then the second word then the third word then the fourth word because the German isn't working in that way, so you do need to get a strong sense of what's in it, and then to try to convey the tenor of it as well as the semantic sense of it. Because sentences have different feelings, clearly. So it's largely a matter of writing English which I would be prepared to put my name to, and then pushing it, you know, closer and closer to the original, as far as I felt it could go. I translated Hölderlin's translations of Sophocles, the *Antigone* and the *Oedipus*, and I think it got only one review, by a friend of mine actually, and he said, 'He could have been a bit more radical here or there,' and 'This isn't really as radical as Hölderlin.' And it isn't, because you do feel yourself being drawn into not wanting to alienate people. So in answer to that question it's this trying to mediate between being as close as possible but writing an English which is adequately idiosyncratic and yet your own.

HT: It's a difficult task!

DC: I know, it's crazy, isn't it?

HT: I wondered also, we've talked a little bit before about this dynamic of service and autonomy-

DC: Yes, it's interesting that.

HT: - going on in translation. I wondered if you had any thoughts regarding the idea of creativity or genius with regard to that sort of scale or dynamic or quarrel, whatever you want to call it, of service and autonomy. I think you've quoted Coleridge before saying that with translation, it's difficult to give it the brilliancy of language because it lacks the 'warmth of the original conception'.

DC: Yes, that's right.

HT: My feeling is that because you're translating, you're having to make choices, you can't possibly write anything in translation without making all these choices-

DC: No.

HT- because there's no exact same corresponding word. It's in a different language so it can't be exactly the same. For me I guess I'm slightly more of the opinion that I think the warmth of this original conception still very much exists in translation, but I'm interested to hear from you as somebody who has had a long career of working, of writing, of translating, of writing other things, how you see not only that service/autonomy dynamic, but how you think creativity sits in relation to that.

DC: I was in a market in the south of France and I picked up a translation of *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* into French, and I looked at that, and the French way of doing it. There's absolutely no doubt about this that in the eighteenth, nineteenth, perhaps even in the twentieth century, it was to glance at the German and then write very nice French. I mean really nice French, and you could see that there was a connection, but if you wanted to know what was in German exactly you wouldn't be looking at that. That's this feeling of the superiority of the French language. And generally speaking that is the total domestication of the original into your tongue because it's nicer to read like that, it's less effort, so that their translations of Homer famously just sounded like Racine. Whereas Chapman's Homer in the sixteenth century, these clunky great inventions - one is fourteen syllables, what they call these fourteeners, there's a caesura - and that really does feel like something that is definitely Elizabethan English, but there's an oddity about it which makes you think. And that's the one that affected Keats, hearing that read aloud. This whole thing about how foreign you keep it, Hölderlin is the extreme of it, but Voss before him had done the Iliad in a way that was felt back then to be really quite foreign actually, despite people thinking that German was the natural inheritor of the Greek language. And for me that shock of having to make the effort to see that this is not written now, and it is not written in your language, this is foreign, is vital because it puts you in a different relationship with it, it shifts you out of your own insularity, which is needed, and therefore you can translate in a way which accentuates that. Now coming back to this thing about the original, then, I don't subscribe to the school that says 'Well, you might as well not bother because it all gets lost' - or to Shelley, it's dead before it comes into being. The dispiriting fact that translations on the whole last a generation and the original texts, the good ones, last forever, it's straightforward to say, but actually it's quite odd. Why does this not live and why does that live and carry on living? You can see some mistakes that people make, because Helen [Constantine], she translates a lot and she translated *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* for Penguin first of all, and they said to her, 'Would you first of all read the one that's around now and see what you think of it?' And she read it and in all honesty said 'This seems to me to be perfectly good.' But then the Americans said, 'We need a new one anyway.' But translations that really last are themselves works of genius. And I don't know whether there are fewer. You can see the mistake some people make is to translate a nineteenth-century novel into the language of the streets of 2019. The language of the streets lasts about ten minutes, so before it's published it's hopelessly dated. And therefore you are trying to arrive at a language which is not up-to-the minute modern, because that way its sell-by-date is gone before you've finished, but is not the sort of archaic stuff that I've mentioned before where it vaguely sounds like Shelley or whatever. It's a sort of subterfuge, really, because it's got to sound sufficiently strange in ways which are not just the strangeness of the antiquarian. And, in my view anyway, it's not got to sound so up-to-the-minute modern that there's no life in it.

And that's coming back to this Otherwhereish kind of language really. Coleridge said: I write in metre and rhyme because that signals that something is going on here that I wish you to attend to because this is important, and it's other than the language of

ordinary speech - which is necessary and good - but this is something different. This is as different as going into a theatre or the Greek amphitheatre, where you're going to watch something which absolutely pertains to you, and your civic life, but is other. Greek choruses were in a dialect that nobody spoke anymore, so it's very strange. Increasingly a lot of modern verse - particularly American - was getting ever more colloquial and it was getting ever more like the way we really speak. And you lose your purchase on the realities that you're trying to talk about: it's not straightforward anymore because you can't just make this rhyme ABABAB dah-dee-dah-dee-dah because it doesn't work anymore, but if you don't do that you've got to do something else. And it's the same with translation, because you get quite a lot of translators of Rilke who say, 'In the *Neugedichte* they all rhyme, and I can't rhyme so I won't rhyme.' I said, 'Fine, don't rhyme, but do something else. What are you going to do? What are you going to do that will signal to your reader, now in English, that this is verse, not prose, that this matters? What other things do you have at your disposal for signalling the otherness of this language?' You can't just reach for the old ones, unless you're very good at rhyming. So when you are translating you're wanting a language which will signal its otherness, but not in a way that just makes you think it doesn't touch me because it's from five-hundred years ago…. Now what we're trying to get across is the original genius of the thing, because certainly in my case the people I've translated have been very, very great writers. So that's not in doubt, you're not trying to make amends or make up for their shortcomings. You've got something which is way out of my league. and I know that, totally, I don't have any doubts about that. But I want to serve in the sense that these books have mattered enormously to me, and the great joy of being a teacher is just seeing that it matters to other people as well, to generations coming along, it's absolutely wonderful, that. And anybody who had an interest in something that was beyond their ken, that's second to none, that. So that's the service, and it's not just service to the text, it's service to a possible readership who will be delighted and instructed in a way that I have been. And then we're back to this conundrum, in what language do I do that? It's got to be a language which is persuasive, and by persuasive I mean it's got to get through people's reluctance about the past or about the foreignness or about the difficulty and induce them to think this matters. That's all you want, and then it's not up to you, but you try to supply a text that will induce somebody to think there's something going on here which I need. I was just talking to somebody else about this, with relation to Hölderlin really, and about this old thing about why we should bother about the tradition. There's a poem by George Mackay Brown called 'The Helmsman' and it's set in a kind of archaic Orkney age with people traveling on boats. And there's a bard in the boat and he's suddenly picked up that the poets in the places they're landing at don't do it the same way, they've got different subjects and they've got different metres, and he says, 'I am anxious concerning my craft.' And that means: they've got something that they're doing well, perhaps I can use it. Translation is like that the whole time because you think, 'They're doing it this way, and I don't mean to forfeit what I'm doing, but I ought to attend.' And every ordinary reader is a translator in that sense, because when you read you're taking it into your own psyche, the sum total of what you are to date, and you're turning it into something that matters to you. So there's that feeling all the while that

there should be in a good reader that something is going on here and that if I pay attention, with the help of this translator if it's a foreign text - and I'm deeply grateful to loads of translators myself - then there's good use in it. There's no question about the value of the thing in my mind anyway. I've only ever done things that I've thought were worth my while because I know it from teaching. And again going back to the writing of a poem, it's exactly the same with translation, be it a poem or the poetic language of Kleist or a poem with strict metres - as you're doing it, ideally speaking you've got the sum total of your linguistic resources to date at your disposal. In practice, no, because you've forgotten or it's not surfaced. That's why the OED is such a great resource. It's the only thing I have on the screen, not a German dictionary, it's always the OED because I love accessing that sense of what the language has ever done - the words have changed their meaning, sometimes they've lost that meaning, sometimes they're there still in the language. Robert Graves, when he began on Molière, he said, 'I've flogged all my books except the OED.' You've got a sense of what connotations go with it, and it's nice to know the age of things. This is terribly amorphous, but what I'm trying to say is that there is this indubitably valuable thing, which is the original, and you are then deploying everything at your disposal to get it across into a persuasive language, and you're going to fail. So it's Samuel Beckett: 'Try, fail, try again, fail better.' And that's perfectly well understood by anyone who does it. But I don't find that depressing in the least, actually. There's definitely a struggle going on there, because you do have to make a poem in the English tongue, and you do have to convey these extraordinarily difficult, testing hypotactic sentences. So you really are concentrating. I've got no time whatsoever for the kind of- there's quite a lot of it around by people who ought to know better, really, who kind of do versions, they don't really have any German but they glance at Rilke and Celan. The odd thing about being a British [translator] is that there are relatively few people qualified in the way that I am, which is a disgrace actually - that is to say, having another language. There are a lot of poets I admire greatly - we're good friends and so forth - that don't have a foreign language at all. Whereas, if you look at the complete works of Celan, the complete works of quite a lot of German writers, Rilke's another, there's a whole couple of volumes which are translations, and very good ones too. I used to do a class with sonnets by Barrett Browning, with the Rilke next to it, not saying, 'This is by her,' and 'This is by him.' They were unnamed, two sonnets which clearly stood in a very close relationship to one another and it's quite hard to tell actually. You can work it out if you knew who it was, but they're very, very good.

HT: I wanted to pick up on this idea of poetic language and translated language being a sort of Otherwhereish. So in terms of translating verse and translating prose, and if we think of Kleist in particular - you've mentioned already the dialogue in the plays - is there anything else that struck whilst you were translating the prose? I think you did the short stories first, is that right? And then the plays?

DC: Yes, that's right, and then the plays and the anecdotes and the essays.

HT: Was there anything that struck you about your translation process between prose and verse?

DC: I think it was much the same. Normally you'd be able to say that shifting from prose to verse you've shifted into something which is just more difficult, but I don't think you can say that in Kleist's case because of the nature of those sentences. Some of the exchanges in the plays are a whole lot easier than the exchanges in the stories, actually. So that's not a difference in degree of difficulty. And Kleist writing in verse is not not the Kleist who was writing prose. He was a real writer, the style is his, it pervades everything. I mean, some of the best writing by Lawrence is in his letters, he's a very great letter writer, and it's absolutely him - he writes in that same sort of way with lots of commas and it's sort of hurrying on and that's somebody whose way of writing is his way of being, really. So it's as close as that. Yeah, it's a good thing.

HT: If translated writing has this odd Otherwhereish quality and poetic writing also has this signalling that something different is going on, does that mean that translated verse has a double layer of [strangeness]?

DC: I think it's the same, actually, I think it's the same thing. We're really talking about equivalence, because it won't be the same strangeness, it will be a strangeness that you hope is an equivalent but that is strange in your tongue and not just stupid, not just so odd that nobody's going to bother, but hauntingly strange. And one of the great achievements sometimes of writers who have stopped using strict verse forms is still to be able to manage an oddity, a feeling that this is other, as I say it doesn't matter how you do it but you have to signal that this is - Don't get me wrong, I don't feel contemptuous about ordinary language, it's what we do all the time. But I do think that socially it's terribly important that there should be a space in which something- and we've barely got it anymore. It's very noticeable if you go to a concert where you're listening to music: that's a good instance of people foregathering in a space designated for that, where they sit quiet and if you're lucky don't fiddle with their phones and don't receive messages but are actually- it's a religious sort of feeling. I'm completely secular personally, but I deeply value these areas - few of them left - where you can go without affectation and participate in something which is not ordinary living. And again ordinary living is what matters, who you are as citizens, but the Greeks thought - it's very partial and the women weren't there - the Greeks thought the citizens benefitted by going to the theatre and coming back into civic life. Brecht, from a completely different notion of what is helpful, had the same- they all do really, they all have the idea or they wouldn't be doing it. I mean they're doing something which they're driven to do but which they certainly perceive is of a social use. It's quite hard to define because it doesn't save the National Health Service, but it might make people aware that mutual aid is a good thing. Because for an awful lot of poems, the working of a poem is actually democratic, the actual pieces of it. No piece works without another piece. There's an awful lot in ecological thinking, anti-mechanistic thinking where the whole web is a web. It's held together because all the parts are in play. And when you start to think of yourself as a kind of living entity - there's a very good exhibition about bacteria on in the Science Museum - they are in a cosmos of things, all alive. And the literary work is pieced together, but there's no kind of sovereign over it, or boss, it's a

work in the parts, and all the parts matter. It's going back to this living corpus of literature - you can't take something away without the whole thing being diminished.

I've used this instance once before. Václav Havel was a dissident in the Czech Republic, and he edited magazines and he was a playwright, and he got bunged in jail, and then he became president. He wrote very interestingly about what happens when a regime closes down magazines, and he completely uses this ecological image. He says even if you hadn't read that magazine, even if hardly anybody had read that magazine, something, and he calls it a 'possibility', has been taken out. The possibility that somebody would read it, or that in an interplay with others it would have effected some change, you've removed it. And obviously you can carry on removing things to a certain point and the thing kind of more or less keeps going, but there will come a point where it won't work anymore, there won't be enough that is interacting. And the way it's going, this is like the desperate image in Kleist of holding the whole thing up, we're pretty near that. Every day the Barents Sea is warming, and that is going to cause a huge expansion of the cod population for about five years, but as it's doing that it kills off all the others - so there'll be no cod population, none.

HT: It's grim, isn't it?

DC: Well, it's just every day. And I mean, I'm not holding the papers thinking, 'What bloody awful piece of news can I find today?' It's in your face the whole time.

HT: That's true.

DC: There's an awful lot of ecological thinking - it's the main strand altogether now, to insist on the totality of it, one total. That's why they moved to the expression 'Gaia', the earth itself is a part of - I'm not being fantastical about it; that now seems to be accepted as scientifically so, the interdependency of everything. It's a shift from the Newtonian understanding of physics, which is entirely mechanistic, which the Romantics objected to very strongly, towards a kind of holistic interplay of things alive in various forms. Because at the level of subatomic physics the Newtonian laws don't actually apply anymore - they start doing things which are not able to be fitted into that completely mechanistic [system]. So it seems as though the deeper you get into it, the more you get into an understanding which is actually holistic.

HT: I wanted to pick up on what you said about religion, and we mentioned briefly Christianity and the classical. Those have been key themes: those two strands of imagery have been key throughout your other work. You once said you were very interested in the sort of energy of the classical world as juxtaposed with the compassion of Christianity.

DC: Yes.

HT: Having read your translations of Kleist, and in Kleist's texts themselves, these are two strong themes that come across, so I was wondering if that was something that you were thinking about while you were translating Kleist. What is your view of Kleist in that regard?

DC: I think the pity in Kleist is the awareness of fragility. And the ability to forgive, and they don't all forgive, but die Marquise von O is the feeling that the world is fragile and liable to collapse and we should look after one another. Now it's not that explicit in Kleist because there's an awful lot of vengefulness as well - as in *Penthesilea* this horrific mix of 'Küsse' and 'Bisse', 'Das reimt sich'. And the very last thing he is is any kind of preacher. He's not going to pull back from contemplating just how fragile all this is.

I was talking about that yesterday at this Brecht day I did. There's an awful lot of writing by Brecht at the point when he was starting to move towards committing to left-wing politics when he just describes what life in the city is, life through a series of voices, a lot of women's voices. They're completely pitiless poems, they're poems spoken as it were aloud to somebody, an addressee which is the reader, just bleakly saying this is what it's like, and not asking for pity, but it is actually pitiful, so you don't need the writer to say 'Look at this, more mutual aid would come in handy'. The reading experience is very much a sort of participation in an event that you have a response to. And it's always a dialectic - that's why you can read writers you disapprove of and yet you to and fro. So it's not as though you just sit there swallowing it. You sit there taking it in and intelligently conversing with it in some way. The classical world for him, mainly it's *Penthesilea* and *Hermannschlacht*...

HT: I was struck in your notes on the translations for all the plays, for *The Broken Jug*, for *Amphitryon*, in most of the notes if not all of them, you mention the references that are going on, and obviously In *The Broken Jug* you've got biblical references going on but you've also got *Oedipus*, for example.

DC: Yes.

HT: And in your note on *Amphitryon* you mentioned Genesis 6,4 even before you went on to talk about the classical structure. I got a sense that though the language of your translations that there was a Christian world coming through particularly strongly.

DC: I think it's only that living when we do and living when he did all this is there. And obviously you're massively marked by this state of transition from BC to AD. I've been doing a lot of Brecht at the minute. He gave this interview for a women's magazine once, and they said, 'What book has influenced you most?' And he said, 'Sie werden lachen, die Bibel.' It's the Luther Bible, and in our case it's the authorised version, and that is a linguistic thing as much as anything. It's an extraordinarily powerful addition to the language, both languages: they're very similar, German and English, in that wealth of canonical texts. I stopped being a believer at the age of fifteen, but I've carried on reading the Bible a lot actually. And I like church, some churches, small churches, because it's a precinct. It's got ancient yew trees which were there before the churches. I went into Binsey at Christmas. There was a nice smell of just being cold and rather damp, and there was a vase of flowers from the isles of Scilly. There was nobody else there and there was a well there which was sacred to them and so forth. And I don't see any reason really for an atheist to say 'Well, this doesn't touch me'. It touches me profoundly. It's like the Larkin poem about going into

the graveyard, about seriousness, just seriousness, just that, and a space. One of my favourite religious poets is R.S. Thomas, who spends as much time on his knees in a church thinking there's nothing here, there's just a shell, and praying that something will come in, which is very like Hölderlin. The poem 'Friedensfeier' is making the space into which this may come. And you can understand the structure again, the syntactic structure, as the building of the space. Certainly in Hölderlin a lot, actually, because in 'Friedensfeier' he is physically erecting the space and the tables and the fruit on the tables, and, and then it's an address to peace, hoping that the spirit of peace will come in. So I suppose an awful lot of writing is actually within the syntax making a space for some kind of epiphany. Joyce uses the word epiphany an awful lot - he's less religious in a strict sense than I am, and I've never felt the need to say 'Well, I grew up and it's all gone now'. It hasn't. Which doesn't mean I'm going to crawl to the cross at the last minute - I'm not. [laughs]

But it clearly matters, because there's an extraordinary wealth of stories, like the Lazarus story and Mary Magdalene in the garden and just any number of them. And Christ is in some ways a deeply sympathetic character who's clearly got no place whatsoever in the way the world is now. He'd be tipping the hedge-fund managers out on their asses, there's absolutely no doubt about that. There's no possible negotiation between what it says in the Bible - the New Testament particularly - and the carry-on that we're in, none really. There are an awful lot of good Christians around, and some of them are my good friends. Our neighbour Maggie is the absolute epitome of Christianity in practice. She does good works, and she's helped open a shelter for the homeless in Jericho, and she goes down there once a week and sleeps there. I've got another neighbour like that. So stuff like that is it in practice, that's the Gospel. My brother was an expert witness at one of the many enquiries into historic child abuse. He is a historian. In 1944 there was this idea in Britain that you would never send children away into any space; there had to be accommodation, and you wouldn't split siblings ever, and you would keep them in contact with their parents if at all possible. Until into the 60s Barnardos and others, the Christian Brothers, were still sending these children out, separating them and telling them their mum and dad were dead, and putting them in the outback where they were systematically abused in the most monstrous fashion. [My brother] provided the expert [testimony] - and I wrote a story out of that, terrible stuff. It is so awful I really had to leave stuff out - there comes a point where it's too vile to serve as a fiction. But at the heart of that is this abuse of children, and Christ is very definite about children. 'Suffer the little children to come unto me.' And he puts his arm around one and says, 'If you ever harm one of these, it were better for that man to be sunk to the bottom of the ocean with a millstone around his neck.' And these were Christian brothers, with a person in charge who was a member of the Christian Church, with children in their power from the age of seven or eight right through to fourteen. And they kicked them out totally destroyed, unforgivable. But there's this clear Christian teaching about children. That's all still there, and you can call it Christian or you can just call it decent humanity. It's just that there is chapter and verse for it, a lot of it, for why you shouldn't be doing things like that, and yet you get an institution of it who is systematically doing exactly that. Coming back to Kleist, there's a lot of pity

and sympathy for the human lot. His characters are less fully developed, and intentionally I think, than other novelists or writers of fiction. At the same time, you know, characters like Eve and Alcmene, the female characters are deeply touching because they're riven in this fashion, and in a world that doesn't fit their feeling, and their feeling is a desirable and true feeling. And then the world, usually men, let them down. The *Amphitryon* thing is just torture - he basically tortures her, Jupiter, and she's trying to fit this stuff together. And I think that struggle of trying to make the world fit is actually a noble view of it and a humane view of it is deeply touching.

HT: I had picked up on the fact that you used the image of the keystone arch in 'An Island', partly because you make sure to mention it in your introduction to your translations of Kleist, and I was very struck by that. I was wondering if there were any other points in your other writing, so not your Kleist translations, where you were actively, consciously thinking of Kleist specifically?

DC: I can't remember any, but that doesn't mean that it's not been with me. It's been a while since I did it, but they come in and out of your consciousness, and I'm very glad that we're talking because it reminds me, if I needed reminding, that this is terribly important. I think I more or less unconsciously view the world as deeply fragile, and I was confirmed in that view, or helped to that view, as an undergraduate, reading it. And I think it was a very timely - it was the period when you couldn't possibly think the world was trustworthy, I think that's what my generation grew up with, after what had been done, and it grew up with a contrary tendency which was very marked indeed: the sense that 'This has got to be sorted out, we've got to now provide a society with decency'. And with the Education Act in '44 and then the National Health Service, there was lots of very liberal legislation in the 60s. And the real narrowing of the gap. My mum and dad's generation stopped school at fourteen or fifteen, and then my brother and I were both the first [to go to] grammar school and university. And you see without very much money at all the state helping, it being understood that the state was there to do precisely that, namely to help its citizens to their self-realisation - it was just axiomatic, really. Come Thatcher comes the reversal, and we've been in that counter-revolution ever since.

HT: Why do you think that happened?

DC: I don't know. It's a failure, it's an absolute failure. You can say that there's a Labour government after that and Blair did a good deal of good, but he also got us into the Iraq war. And the way it is now, we get a rapporteur from the UN telling us that 20% of our kids are malnourished, and this is a rich country, and 20% of children are going to school hungry. Can you believe it? It's absolutely disgraceful, and it's because, unlike in 1945 when they threw out a very great war leader, there just has not since then been the will to create, and not just create but defend a society fit for human beings to live in. You see why it happens, and it's international finance and all the rest of it, but as soon as you start being frightened to raise income tax by 5p because you won't get in next time, you're screwed basically. And all this stuff about 'Where's the money going to come from for the NHS?': you tax. Most people that I know would

willingly pay an awful lot more just to see the thing working instead of watching the whole fabric of it crumble. And these unspeakable swine, with their money offshore, absolutely secure against the whole debacle - they're not going to be touched if there's a collapse. Meanwhile they wonder why there are entire areas of Salford now, and Liverpool and Manchester and Newcastle as well which are just ruins, where you just get betting shops next to cheap food outlets and pawn shops. And you wonder how they can bear it, actually, to look at it. Well, is that mindset far from Kleist? It's far from a concern about what the nature of society is, the recognising of the fragility of it, the absolute commitment to holding it together. Because it's not always ill will, it's just the lack of will. There's got to be a national consensus as to what we will do and what we won't do, and what we will let happen and what we absolutely will not let happen. And what we absolutely will not let happen has gone, really.

HT: Do you think it's partly because we're moving away in time from the World Wars, and moving to generations who have had less influence -?

DC: I think the Brexit thing is that, and all this absolute bollocks about Britain standing alone and the Dunkirk spirit and all the rest of it, there's a whole Commonwealth army on our side as well as the Americans, and the idea that we sort of defeated Hitler. Russia lost 25 million dead and they defeated Hitler - if they'd not won at Stalingrad and Smolensk and places then he wouldn't have been stopped. Stalin is as bad as Hitler in lots of ways but it was actually the Russians that were bled white on the Eastern front. I don't know how much this helps at all really but it's the willingness to carry on trotting out absolute lies about your country's past, and they're just fabrications, fabrications that are sort of consoling in some way.

HT: You mentioned it was during your undergraduate degree that you became more aware of the fragility of the world, is that right?

DC: When I was fifteen or sixteen I started reading Lawrence and Robert Graves and two or three others, and then there was all this French and German stuff that came in as well. And it seemed like this was it really. An awful lot of it was writing that was dealing with the Second World War in one way or another. We were in Tübingen in 1968, and there was a student body there that was full of it. A doctor was an ex-Naz;, the lawyer was an ex-Nazi; the professor was an ex-Nazi, so there was an awful lot of feeling that we haven't actually got rid of this stuff yet. So all the way through it's felt as though there's something that it's necessary for us to be dealing with. And forgetting I suppose is dangerous actually. You don't have to be a professional historian but you need to be taught.

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