

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

TADEUSZ ROZEWICZ'S MARIAGE BLANC

by

GAIL HANRAHAN

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DEPARTMENT OF DRAMA

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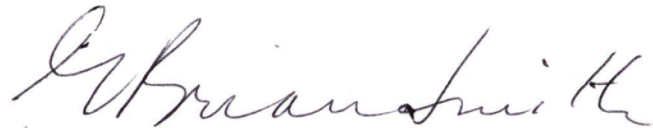
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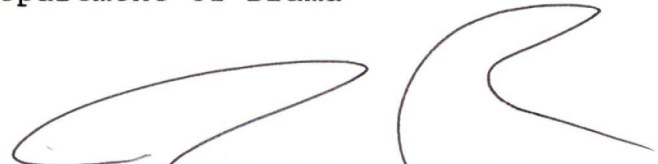
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\_\_\_\_\_  
Patricia Benedict  
Supervisor, Department of Drama



\_\_\_\_\_  
Professor G. Brian Smith  
Department of Drama



\_\_\_\_\_  
Professor Douglas T. McCullough  
Department of Drama

Sept 12 1991

Date



\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. John Heintz  
Department of Philosophy

## ABSTRACT

This thesis outlines the directorial process which led to the production of Tadeusz Rozewicz's Mariage Blanc presented by the University of Calgary's Department of Drama at the Reeve Theatre from March 27 to April 6, 1991.

The introduction briefly presents Polish playwright Tadeusz Rozewicz and his work, as well as the reception Mariage Blanc received when first produced in Warsaw in 1975 and in New Haven in 1977. The first chapter is a tableau by tableau analysis of the script with emphasis on thematic and stylistic considerations. Chapter II analyses the play's characters individually and attempts to define their place within the play as a whole. A transcript of an interview conducted by the director with Rozewicz and his translator, Adam Czerniawski during a conference on Polish culture at Warwick University in December 1990 constitutes the third chapter. Chapter IV outlines the director's cooperative process with the various designers and experts involved in the production as well as the concepts which were arrived at through these processes. The fifth chapter describes the rehearsal process with the cast on a weekly basis from February 11 to opening night. The conclusion offers the director's assessment of the final staged production.

## Acknowledgments

Contributions to this thesis began many years ago when my parents entrusted me with the freedom of exploration and creativity, gifts for which I can never express commensurate gratitude.

For their more recent contributions I wish to express heartfelt gratitude to the Department of Drama and the following people. To the cast and crew of Mariage Blanc: thank you for coming out to play. Thank you to Lesley Preston for understanding the awkward words and making them a tangible and emotional reality; to Jim Andrews, John Bent Jr. and Todd Johnson for their talent and their ability and desire to express it; to Douglas McCullough and Philip McCoy for broadening my creative horizon; to Don Monty for his patience, endurance and skill.

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## INTRODUCTION

When North Americans consider Polish drama they think of Stanislaw Ignacy Witkiewicz and Slawomir Mrozek, but rarely of Tadeusz Rozewicz. Yet in his native Poland Rozewicz is a leading contemporary poet and playwright. When I interviewed Malgorzata Semil, editor of the Polish theatre magazine Dialog, she did not hesitate to say that Rozewicz's every poem is immediately published and his every play immediately produced.

While Rozewicz, born in 1921, began writing poetry as a boy, Halina Filipowicz says he was first recognized as a major talent in 1947 when his collection of war poems, Anxiety (Niepokoj), was first published (Theatre 11). In fact, the atrocities Rozewicz experienced during the Second World War, became the catalyst for his writing. As a Polish Jew, Rozewicz witnessed the execution of many acquaintances, including his older brother Janusz, also a poet. Thus, he felt it imperative to find an alternate poetic genre which would admit the atrocities he had witnessed; he strove to create "not verses but facts" (qtd. in Filipowicz, Theatre 8). His poetry, prose and drama then became what Daniel Gerould describes as "'junk art' [created] out of scraps of quotations, clippings, lists, and documents" (264).

Since 1960, when his first play The Card Index (Kartoteka) was published and produced in Warsaw, Rozewicz has written close to twenty plays, all of which have been



produced in other European countries. (His last play The Trap was written in 1982.) Beginning in the mid-seventies, Rozewicz's dramatic style changed from what he calls an "open" form of theatre to a more "closed" form. By open form plays he means plays which become fully realized only as theatre productions, while closed form refers to plays which are more traditional in structure (qtd. in Filipowicz, Theatre 232).

Mariage Blanc (Biale malzenstwo), published in 1974, was the first of Rozewicz's closed dramas, which he says are "normal ... plays with a beginning and an end" (qtd. in Filipowicz, Theatre 233). Indeed, Mariage Blanc has a definite plot or story line. Set at the turn of the Century, it depicts the coming of age of Bianca, the daughter of a sexually aggressive Manor Lord and his frigid, materialistic wife. However, there is more to the play than its story line. In an often light tone, Mariage Blanc explores such universal themes as the freedom of choice of the individual and the opposition between the carnal and the societal nature of human beings. Furthermore, despite its linear plot structure, the play explores various styles of presentation, incorporating such diverse forms as realism, dream sequences, symbolism and surrealism.

When Mariage Blanc was first produced at the Theatr Maly in Warsaw in 1975, it was generally well received by critics and audiences in spite of the fact that it pushed

the limits of respectability and was thought "scandalous" (Fik 14; Filipowicz, Theatre 233). However, Marta Fik speculates that the play may not have had such success had director Tadeusz Minc followed all of Rozewicz's stage directions:

It seems that even the most stolid theatre-goers would hardly endure the intermittent images like this one: 'Only after a while does she take a glance at the younger man ... she sees between his legs a huge, stiff member, as if made of wood. It looks as if it wanted to pierce her.'" (14)

Furthermore, Edward Czerwinski maintains that some critics accused Rozewicz of "capitalizing on the public's aroused interest in sexuality." While the accusation may have been valid, I must agree with Czerwinski's when he says: "... if sex is equally intellectually stimulating and commercially tantalizing, the charge of profiteering seems wholly irrelevant" (48).

While the American premiere of Mariage Blanc was directed by Kazimierz Braun for the Slavic Cultural Centre in Port Jefferson, N.Y., the first English language production (under the title White Marriage) was directed by Andrzej Wajda for The Yale Repertory Theatre and opened in April 1977. While Wajda apparently conveyed the sexual explicitness of the text more closely than Minc, the production did not arouse controversy. Mel Gussow, in his

New York Times review, offers the following explanation: "The play is unconventional, but for us, it is not exactly revolutionary. In fiction, led by Erica Jong, women's sexual fantasies are a familiar subject" (43). Jack Kroll, writing for Newsweek proclaims White Marriage the "best new play and best production of the [1977] season" (115). Similarly impressed, Harold Clurman writes in The Nation: "Wajda has captured the intent and spirit of the play to perfection. The production, in setting, movement, characterization, is an unostentatious gem" (539). Gussow, clearly less enthusiastic, derides the production for being insubstantial and a surprise coming from such a "respected Polish poet as well as playwright" (43).

I believe that almost twenty years after it was written in 1973, Mariage Blanc still has the potential to provoke Calgarian audiences on two levels. First, while 1991 audiences readily accept the bombardment of sexual explicitness on the movie screen, they are less accustomed and willing to accept nudity and sexual explicitness on the live stage. Secondly, in the mild-mannered society which characterizes Canadians to foreigners, individual freedom and carnal nature are largely repressed. If theatre is meant to "provoke and entertain", as I recall having heard Mariage Blanc has great potential for both.

The following chapters attempt to trace the steps which led to the Department of Drama's final production of the

1990-1991 season, Mariage Blanc, from my perspective as director. This paper begins with pre-production work, proceeds with the application of this work to the staged production in co-operation with designers, experts and actors, and concludes with my assessment of the final product.

CHAPTER I:  
SCRIPT ANALYSIS

Typically, the first step in play direction is script analysis. Research can be effected on the basis of several different components, such as genre, style, themes, structure and tone. However, each script is different from the next and must be analyzed according to its particular constitution. Furthermore, as each director is an individual with a particular point of view, the constituents of this analysis are largely a product of the director's interests and perspective.

The following chapter will analyze the script of Mariage Blanc according to my particular concerns and point of view. Thus, I will try to uncover the play's themes, as well as the manner in which these are presented, including genre and tone. It is perhaps appropriate at this point to define the meaning I attribute to these terms. By theme, I mean the larger concerns which the play addresses. When using the word 'genre' I refer to the mode of presentation of these themes and tone refers to the density of the atmosphere created. Though by no means interchangeable, these terms are very much interrelated.

Mariage Blanc is unique in the canon of Rozewicz's work. It is not an absurdist play as were his earlier works, yet it does not fit snugly into the realistic or naturalistic theatre mold. Scholars and critics alike seem perplexed by the nature of its genre, on which they cannot agree. This is perhaps due to what Artur Sandauer describes

as Rozewicz's "and-and" approach rather than the more easily accepted "either-or" (qtd. in Filipowicz, Theatre 2).

Rozewicz himself seems to request a less confining approach when he says: "I do not separate drama from poetry. They are one to me. Both genres contain the same poetic matter" (qtd. in Filipowicz, Theatre 13). Kroll acquiesces when he says that the "thirteen movements of this theatrical tone poem are brilliant in their effect and variety" (115).

Harold Clurman in his review of the 1977 Yale production writes: "Were I to recite in full detail all the elements which compose White Marriage I would still not convey its extraordinary quality" (539). Filipowicz warns us that Rozewicz's work "defies easy categorization" saying only that it is "generally ... experimental in form and highly personal in tone" (Theatre 3). Clurman says: "It is at once satire, fantasy, poem" (539). Filipowicz, heedless to her own warning, calls it a comedy of manners ("Reality" 457). Marion Boyars publishers say it is a "tragic farce" (back cover), while Rhonda Blair says Bianca is "a kind of feminist tragic hero" (13).

Thus, when Rozewicz says that "each scene is a separate entity which can be staged as an individual play", we might not agree but understand his words as a description of a plan of study (qtd. in Filipowicz, Theatre 233).

My analysis of Mariage Blanc, has led me to agree with Joseph Kelera when he calls the play a collage and to

conclude that each tableau must be identified separately (11). In certain cases, I have found that the mode of presentation is even altered within individual tableaux. In the staged production I did not try to restrict the style of presentation, but rather allowed the variety of genres inherent in the script to evolve during rehearsals.

What follows, therefore, is the analysis of the script, the starting point of all discussions, concepts and rehearsal procedures, which came to fruition in the staged production. It is important to remember, however, that this chapter addresses the script and not its production, as Chapters 4, 5, and 6 have been set out for this purpose.

In an attempt to describe not only my interpretation of the script but also the process by which I arrived at this interpretation, I will proceed in a linear fashion, from tableau to tableau, as well as from beginning to end within each tableau.

On the subject of Rozewicz's plays, Filipowicz states that they are:

... theatrical structures in which each element --the spoken text, sets, costumes, lighting, make-up, the actors' gestures and movement, nonverbal sound -- contributes to conveying the meaning of the whole. (Filipowicz, Theatre 15)

As such, this analysis will not dwell on the written word alone, it will give equal consideration to the images



created by the playwright.

#### Tableau 1: The Girls' Bedroom

Tableau 1, as we will note about all tableaux taking place in the girls' bedroom, operates in a realistic mode. The stage directions at the top of the first tableau tell us that the bedroom contains a paraffin lamp with a pink shade, as well as pictures and a cross on the wall, all of which suggest a young girls' bedroom, complete with innocence and femininity. This is reinforced by the fact that both girls are wearing white nightdresses (9), bringing forth the image of virginity.

As we have seen, Rozewicz is "writing in a predominantly conventional dramatic idiom" (Filipowicz "Reality" 455), which works from exposition to denouement and thus this first tableau is one of exposition. The differences between the two girls are immediately exposed: one is cold, one is warm; one wears her nightdress "done up to her neck" while the other's is "rolled up to her knees" (9); one is a "horrid dead slug" the other is a "sweet little potato" (10). Another difference is also introduced which will become significant as the play progresses and the characters are developed; while Bianca has difficulty sleeping, Pauline keeps falling asleep even after Bianca has awakened her several times. This will later be interpreted as a metaphor for the girls' respective attitudes towards

traditional societal roles. More literally, it expresses Bianca's tormented disposition and Pauline's easy going joie de vivre which allows her untroubled sleep.

Even before the girls start to read the book on sexuality which Bianca has stolen from her father's library. the playwright subtly juxtaposes sexuality to apparent innocence by the physical action he attributes to the girls. First, Bianca kisses Pauline's calf after which the latter exposes a livid violet tongue" which she sticks out fully as Bianca approaches (9). A few lines later, Bianca sits astride Pauline and paints a beard and mustache on her with blackberry juice (10).

When Bianca teases Pauline about the fact that she has "a moustache everywhere", Rozewicz is not so much introducing gender confusion as androgyny. When Bianca says: "Wake up my prince; my sleeping knight, oh my princess ..." she is not confused about Pauline's sexual identity but her level of comfort with the latter does not depend on gender (10).

When the girls begin to read the book, the theme of sexuality is introduced more concretely. The graphic nature of the reading alerts the reader to the fact that this play will not be subtle with respect to the subject of sexuality.

Yet, the outward appearance of innocence never disappears and thus the tableau remains light.

## Tableau 2: Glass and China

Tableau 2 is also one of exposition, though it does add a level of complication. In a comedy of manners genre, it introduces Bianca's parents. Rozewicz presents Mother and Father as normal or typical: she worried about her child, he interested in current affairs and reading the newspaper. In a "drawing room in the Biedermeier style -- or in no style at all" (15), they appear sipping tea and eating macaroons which alludes to their comfortable financial status. The Biedermeier style suggests that the play is set in the second half of the nineteenth century. Research into the style discloses that the name was derived from a caricature of " 'Papa Biedermeier', a comic symbol of middle-class comfort" ("Biedermeier" 202). This period also emphasized family life, and was undoubtedly not chosen haphazardly.

Immediately, however, the alienation between the spouses is suggested by the characters' obliviousness to the each other while they utter unconnected monologues. While Father reads an obituary which makes him think of his own mortality ("Fifty-three years, that's three years younger than me" (15)), Mother is shocked by Bianca's poetry, prompting her to shake her head and repeat phrases such as : "But she used to be such a healthy girl" (16).

The nature of the poetry is passionate and romantic, and its contents obviously refer to physical desire. Bianca

writes:

This is my first love [...] I love the most beautiful son of the earth, a splendid human beast with shining eyes and sleeping soul. I love disgustingly and wonderfully... (16).

While Father dismisses this as "a school-girl's tittle-tattle" (16) and "stuff and nonsense" (17), Mother, at first visibly upset, "reads on with increasing excitement. She reads as if she herself had written and experienced this". Thus, we see Mother as sexually excitable while Father looks on with puzzlement (17). This perception will be radically altered in the next tableau, however, when it becomes apparent that though Mother and Bianca are inflamed by poetry they cannot accept the physical reality of sexuality whereas Father, oblivious to poetry, is acutely receptive to physical stimuli.

After Cook interrupts them, the couple "gradually regain their composure and 'a sense of reality'" (18). The following scene has Mother and Father arguing about glass and china and thus begins to explore a theme central to Rozewicz's newer work: "his contemporaries' indifference, complacency and frenzied pursuit of material goods" (Filipowicz, Theatre 12). Indeed, Mother's emotions reigned in, she immediately retreats into a discussion about "artistic products which could become a part of Bianca's trousseau" (18). The tableau ends with Mother

reading a list of items belonging to a set of china she desires. The list, a trademark of Rozewicz's work, emphasizes the theme of materialism by its almost unbearable length and detail. The Father only hears the words which are important to him as the family breadwinner -- "121 items" -- to which he can only reply: "A stock of china. What a transport problem" (19).

Thus, the tableau ends as it started, Mother absorbed in conventionally feminine concerns while her husband is rational and practical, thus dealing with conventionally male concerns.

### Tableau 3: The Confessional

The third tableau is a radical departure from the style to which the reader has become accustomed. The setting is no longer realistic and a confessional has been brought into the drawing room, after which a naked woman "runs along the back curtain" (20). Father, now called Bull-Father, foams at the mouth while "creaks, grunts, squeals" represent the "voice of the non-existent confessor" (21).

While this tableau does not represent concrete reality as we are witness to in everyday life, it represents inner reality as felt by the characters. What Filipowicz writes about one of Rozewicz's earlier works is still pertinent:

Reality ... is entirely problematic, existing in a constant state of destruction and reconstruction

[...]. Events happen by dreamlike association, the result of analogical thinking rather than reasoning or logic. ("Reality" 449)

What is represented visually is the world as seen by the characters in the confessional. For example, while in the real world there is no naked woman in church, her appearance suggests that Bull-Father is consumed by lust; while Pauline, Milkmaid and Cook do not "twist and turn" in church, their appearance expresses Grandfather's desire.

What is concretely represented in the above is the world as it appears to Bianca, since in her confession she tells us that she now sees "everything as unclean" (20). This is further supported by the fact that Bianca is the first to confess and the end of her confession marks the entrance of the first naked woman. It is clear that in this tableau Rozewicz is exploring the characters' inner thoughts, and gravest concerns while manifesting them concretely.

It is in this tableau that we are first exposed to the theme of social injustice and the lack of individual freedom with which women must contend. Bianca says:

I would like to be a soldier when I grow up and a clergyman now, is that a sin ...? [...] So please tell me why I can't be a priest? Is it because I am a girl and only a man can be a parson? That means everything's been decided once and for all.

(20)

The inequality of men and women, perceived by Bianca, is reinforced by Mother's confession, particularly when she says: "They married me to him without asking my consent" (22). It is further reinforced by Cook's confession in which Father is clearly accused of rape though it is not perceived as such; again, the woman's wish is not taken into consideration. Thus Bianca's perception is legitimized by the other women's confessions and it is clear that her rejection of sexual expression is only partly due to fear. It is also due to her confusion of sexuality with womanhood and thus with lack of choice. This confusion is not personal, however, but an integral part of the world of the play.

A second theme introduced in this tableau is the opposition inherent in the relationship between the forces of nature and social decorum, dictated here by the Catholic church. The fact that the tableau is set in a confessional from which the priest is absent suggests a blind belief on the part of the confessors as well as the emptiness of Catholicism's dictates. Yet, Bull-Father explains that his behavior is beyond his control: "I despise myself and yet I desire them all". Furthermore, Grandfather awaits the day he will be "freed from animal lusts" and tries to approach death with serenity but nature will not allow him to do so, constantly tempting him away from meditation (21).

Filipowicz writes that while Rozewicz used to write "'to render justice to the visible world', now he tries to understand it and to approach it with a degree of tolerance" (Theatre 12). This approach is felt throughout the play, but is perhaps more explicit in "The Confessional" as it is here that the playwright allows Father and Grandfather to express their point of view, thus enabling the reader to be more sympathetic to these characters.

Tableau 4: "Oh Come ..."

Tableau 4 brings us back, if only temporarily, to outer reality and a comedy of manners mode. We are in the drawing room on a summer evening and a party is under way. The period is made more specific by stage directions which state: "Guests of different ages and dressed in various styles, but on the whole conforming to the fashions at the turn of the 19th century" (25). The presence of the piano played by Bianca is significant since, "no Biedermeier household was complete without a piano as an indispensable part of the popularized soiree" ("Biedermeier" 203).

However, it is not long before the genre changes and Rozewicz exercises what Filipowicz calls his "dramaturgical principle of rendering the figurative concrete and theatrical" ("Reality" 454) Thus, Bianca squeaks as she observes huge phalluses on both Benjamin and Grandfather (26, 27, 28). While the playwright wants the apparition to



be made concrete onstage, it is not 'real' since the other characters do not see it. At the same time, it is not so much that Bianca hallucinates as that she sees a concrete expression of Benjamin and Grandfather's desire and her own fear of sexuality.

The fact that no other character sees what Bianca sees literally is also a metaphor for the theme of indifference and complacency found in Tableau 2. Thus, as Mother removes Bianca from the drawing room she is quick to call out to her guests: "Please don't interrupt your enjoyment, she only feels a little faint." While their daughter is obviously in a crisis, Mother is concerned about the smooth running of her party and Father recites a poem about lust. All are oblivious to Bianca's fears just as they do not physically see what she sees. Benjamin, on the other hand, is very concerned and it is significant that his first reaction is to check the buttons on his pants as he searches for an explanation (26). This suggests that he is closer to understanding Bianca than are other characters.

After a blackout at the end of the tableau,

A red bloody glow grows outside the window. A bell tolls. The whole drawing room is swamped in light, like red water. Bull-Father charges through the drawing room. (28)

Thus, reality is again shifted and the play becomes very dark, this moment seemingly foreshadowing the future. If

the bell is a wedding bell, its juxtaposition with the image of Bull-Father as representative of male sexual appetite speaks of terrifying prospects for the repressed Bianca. The red glow summons images of sexuality and death which emphasize the darkness of this moment.

#### Tableau 5: Blood in the Girls' Bedroom

When Tableau 5 begins it is four o'clock in the morning, the interior is grey (29). Into this still, ominous atmosphere awakens Bianca who is intrigued and terrified as she discovers blood on her fingers, nightdress and sheets. She believes something has "snapped" inside her while, in fact, she is only experiencing her first menstrual flow (29).

On a psychological level Bianca's physical change is significant because she is terrified at not knowing what is happening to her. After Aunt offers a sketchy explanation, which we assume happens while she is changing Bianca (30), the latter's terror is amplified because she has become an "unclean" woman (20), bringing her closer to sexuality and the loss of freedom it accompanies. After she has calmed down, her first concern is that Pauline will still want to be with her. "Do I disgust you?" she asks, after which she reassures Pauline that in three days she will be the same as she was before (30). She knows, however, that her life has been irrevocably changed by becoming a woman in a society

which does not allow the female sex any personal freedom.

Bianca's first period also acts as a complication in the play's development, affecting Bianca's psychological state as well as her role within the established world of the play. Although the change is physical, it is also a very concrete expression of psychological character development.

The scene after which Pauline leaves the room and Bianca is left alone foreshadows Tableau 13. The stage directions state: "Suddenly with quick movements she pulls off the sheets and stuffs them into the stove" (29). While on a basic level Bianca's action is an extreme expression of the urge to hide evidence of a shameful experience, metaphorically it represents Bianca's rejection of womanhood and sexuality. This will occur in much the same way in the last tableau when she "gradually throws in [the fireplace] all the items of her clothing, including her underclothes, shoes and stockings" (69).

The title, "Blood in the Girls' Bedroom", obviously referring to menstrual flow, contains a second meaning. To convince Pauline to speak with her, Bianca tells her about a "vision" she had three years before, in which St. Nicholas came to her bedside, bent over her and lifted her nightdress (32). While this is not explicit in the text, the suggestion is that Grandfather is the St. Nicholas described by Bianca. Support for this theory is found in the fact

that Bianca says: "Daddy, Mummy and Auntie, they all went to see friends." No mention is made of Grandfather or his whereabouts. Only a few lines down, however, Bianca swears on "Grandpa's bones it wasn't a dream" (32), making Grandfather's presence more concrete. Furthermore, Pauline's last question and the hesitation with which she asks it suggest that she too has been visited in the night: "And this Nicholas of yours, was he wearing trousers?" (33). It is also significant that Rozewicz takes great pains to explain that the girls were sleeping in separate bedrooms on this special occasion, thus preventing Pauline from being a witness to the 'apparition'.

#### Tableau 6: Wedding and Mourning

In Tableau 6 we are plunged into a comedy of manners idiom reminiscent of Tableaux 2 and 4. As the title suggests, this tableau concerns itself with preparations for Bianca's wedding and Grandfather's funeral. In fact, the shallowness of the preparations is such that it is often difficult to distinguish between the two. Speaking about Bianca's trousseau, Mother says: "For the time being she can manage with a black party dress, a dark skirt, some pretty blouses and two housecoats" (36); discussing mourning etiquette, Aunt says: "Most suitable for a dress is wool and crepe silk, and in the summer georgette, muslin and chiffon" (38).

Rozewicz is reiterating a theme recognized by Filipowicz as one of the playwright's most enduring: "the inauthenticity that has infected Modern life" ("Reality" 447). Thus, the loss of Grandfather is less important to Mother and Aunt than the ensuing funeral at which they intend to look their best, since "women do not need to lose their charm even during mourning" (37). Furthermore, the bride's trousseau becomes a symbol for the adherence to customs and traditions without thought for individual freedom.

When Aunt voices her concerns about Bianca, Mother does not see any alternative to her daughter's marriage and tries to close the discussion curtly with: "I think he is a sensible boy, I am confident about the future" (35). For Mother, it is much easier to deal with the contents of Bianca's trousseau than with the emotional reality of an unwanted marriage.

In this tableau, except for the dialogue referred to above, Aunt and Mother are indistinguishable as characters. This emphasizes the comedic nature of this tableau as the dialogue appears to have been rehearsed as a monologue, one character's line flowing imperceptibly into the other character's line. The following scene illustrates this point:

M: A veil is a blessing for many women.

A: For amongst them there are those who desire to

hide their grief as deeply as possible.

M: And tears especially.

A: From the aggressive and penetrating looks of improper persons. (37-38)

Comedy is also enhanced by the fact that the dialogue often appears to be read out of an etiquette magazine. Lines such as, "For a family meal of 6, select the cream or the blue" (35) as well as, "Mourning following the death of parents or a spouse is worn for a year and six weeks" (38) are illustrative of this point. Thus, weddings and mourning have little to do with human emotion and much to do with traditions and customs which Rozewicz ridicules with relish.

At the end of the tableau, Grandfather enters "as if continuing his earlier confession" (38). While he elaborates on his difficulty facing death or even living a less lust-ridden life, the women do not notice him. This is undoubtedly indicative of the fact that they do not believe in his being alive, let alone having sexual feelings. The women's refusal to examine their situation is also apparent when they do not see Bull-Father running after Milkmaid and Grandfather chasing Cook.

#### Tableau 7: In a Black Wood: Past and Present

The genre in this tableau is a mixture of surrealism and symbolism. At its most basic the tableau depicts a mushroom gathering picnic which is a typical outing in the

Polish countryside. In fact, it refers directly to a scene in the early 19th Century Romantic Adam Mickiewicz's Pan Tadeusz (see Chapter 3). This provides one frame of reference for this tableau's subtitle, "Past and Present". A traditional pastime, mushroom gathering presents the perfect setting for Benjamin's proposal to Bianca as well as for the latter's uncertainty about another accepted tradition, that of marriage.

Following a description of contemporary Polish theatre by Roman Szydlowski, this tableau is an example of: "synthesis of text, movement, pictorial scenes, music and pantomime" (12). In an "almost operatic" and "fairy tale forest", two girls chase each other among the trees (40). Playing like children, they both exit and only Bianca re-enters to be terrified by a man in a black cape who exposes himself to her (40). A second meaning to the subtitle arises which suggests that time is unlinear in this case and that this incident has happened at an earlier time than the ensuing picnic, in turn suggesting that Bianca's turmoil began long before the play's action begins.

The symbolic nature of the tableau is revealed when the characters proceed to a clearing in the forest abundant with "gigantic fairy-tale size" mushrooms, where the women are busy laying out the picnic (41). The tableau is then cut into short scenes in which sexuality is omnipresent. Though never mentioned directly, dark and menacing sexuality

inundates the atmosphere: a double-entendre conversation about cattle which ends in death for the cattle (41-42), a confrontation about natural bodily functions (42), a revelation of Bianca's state of mind in which the "god" fire is equated to male desire and the "goddess" water to female frigidity (42), a conversation in which Pauline tells Benjamin he is the "ithyphallus impudicus" (44), and another double-entendre conversation, this one about chicken. (45-46).

The forces of nature's stronghold is expressed in a surrealist device in which the mushrooms and picnic food are symbols of sexuality and the "conversation between Grandfather and Father turns into grunts, groans, belches and laughter" (43), while the "women's dialogue turns into gagging cries accompanied by gestures" (42).

The Tableau's ending brings us back to that of the fourth tableau: the stage is again bathed in red light suggestive of menacing sexuality and the wedding bell is replaced by more threatening hunting horns (46).

#### Tableau 8: Sweets

The setting for Tableau 8 is the girls' bedroom and again the style is realistic. It is similar to the first tableau in that Pauline eats continuously while Bianca seeks the comfort and warmth of the former's bed (50-51). In an ironic mode the playwright juxtaposes the experiences of the



two girls to comic effect, speaking at once of illicit, 'kinky' sexuality and romantic, virginal innocence. Although Pauline asks Bianca about Benjamin's marriage proposal, she does not listen to the answer but begins her own account of her 'romance' with Grandfather. Thus, Rozewicz captures the detailed curiosity and romanticism of teen-age girls' conversations about boys. Only in this case, one of the 'boys' is an old man who seeks sexual gratification in the young girl's dirty stockings (48). When Bianca says, "He took my hand in his, there was the silence of a temple", Pauline replies: "I must tell you Grandpa is as delicate as your Benjie. He too mutters about a temple" (47). A few pages later we will understand that Grandfather's muttering is about the "temple of [Pauline's] body" (52).

Bianca's poem is impassioned with what appears to be sexual desire: "Oh bellringer of my temple! Swing with thy bronze heart the silent bell of my body" (50). However, she remains repulsed by bodily functions and has asked Benjamin for a "mariage blanc", devoid of sexual contact (53). On the other hand, Pauline's experiences have made her begin to accept her role as a sexual object. However, she will not do so hypocritically and without enjoyment. Thus, it is out of envy, not disgust, that she says: "We have nothing, we are ashamed even of our own bodies, while they run around with their stinkhorns protruding almost outside ..." (52).

While the tone of the tableau remains light, the reader is left skeptical about Bianca's "mariage blanc" and the end strikes an ominous note when Pauline says: "... you are such a fool" (53).

#### Tableau 9: Description

In writing about The Card Index Filipowicz says: "The strength of the play lies in the playwright's brilliant use of the techniques of discontinuity, disjunction, and shifting planes of reality" ("Reality" 449). This can also be said of Mariage Blanc and more specifically of this tableau. As Czerwinski suggests, one of Rozewicz's main themes is the distinction between the world of reality and the world of dream (3). After Bianca has observed and described herself in front of the mirror, Rozewicz writes:

Now perhaps she falls asleep. In these scenes it is not clear whether they are happening in a dream or only in Bianca's mind: a part of her reminiscences and desires. (54)

What is clear is that these scenes reveal deeper truths than reality and theatrical realism would allow; characters reveal their thoughts more completely than at any other time in the play.

While Mother and Bianca's monologues do not disclose occurrences unknown to us, emotions are more complete. Bianca's love for her father and feelings of loss at his

rejection are strong when she says: "When as an adolescent girl I wished to confide in you, to embrace you, you would turn away and talk half-jokingly of a school-girl smelling of buttered rolls" (55). On the other hand, Father's discomfort in dealing with someone of the opposite sex on a non-sexual basis does command some sympathy. Mother, who has seemed frigid till now, reveals that this is not so when she says: "But I desire" (55). Unfortunately, her desire has never been directed towards her husband. In all cases there is great disparity between inner and outer realities.

Mother and Bianca both relate the injustices wrought by those of the female sex. Thus, when Bull-Father begins to chase after Mother it is with solidarity that Bianca kills him, not only for herself and her mother but for womankind. The solution she arrives at in the real world, renouncing her womanhood, is much more complex and less effective.

Although it is not clear what scenes Rozewicz has in mind in the stage directions quoted above, it appears that "normal daylight" (55) brings with it a return to reality. We must not, however, overlook the title of the tableau, "Description"; Aunt , Benjamin and Grandfather will be revealed more completely, definitely pushing the limits of reality. The stage directions state:

[Aunt] is grimacing with her lips in a strange way, red lips surrounded with black hair which look very ambiguous. Benjamin stares at these

improper lips as if spellbound. (56)

As such, both she and Benjamin are physicalized as sexual beings. Furthermore, if this is the "real world" (Filipowicz, Theatre 243), Grandfather's babbling reveals more surely his senility and sexual obsession. Benjamin's homage to physical desire and Aunt's last line, "Mariage blanc ... mariage ... blanc ..." summon skepticism towards the fulfillment of Bianca's wish (58).

#### Tableau 10: The Bride's Trousseau

For the last time, in Tableau 10 the girls converse before falling asleep. The dialogue is very short but two certainties emerge: Pauline has become extremely callous and selfish while Bianca has become irrational and has obviously not come to terms with her impending wedding night.

The focus of the tableau is on Bianca's trousseau however, not on the dialogue. Though she destroys the entire contents, she does not do so in a rage of frustration; "she does all this in a passion but doesn't lose control", and further, "she systematically cuts up each item" (60). Thus, Bianca deliberately destroys what Rozewicz had previously used as a symbol of the adherence to customs and traditions (Tableau 6). Yet, the fact that she ties up with ribbon the linen she has destroyed suggests that she will not turn her back on marriage completely, but

will not be married in the traditional sense, following traditional roles; she still believes in the possibility of an unconsummated marriage.

#### Tableau 11: The Rehearsal

In a realistic mode, Tableau 11 juxtaposes Catholicism and virtue against seduction and natural desire. Attributing Piotr Skarga's The Lives of Saints (Filipowicz, Theatre 234, 243; Chapter 3) to Bianca, Rozewicz has Pauline and Benjamin rehearse the play the former has written for her wedding celebration. The rehearsal, set up by Pauline, is only a pretext to enable her to seduce Benjamin before he is married.

Thematically the rehearsal is also a tool by which the playwright can further explore the theme of social and religious convention opposing the natural or animalistic side of human nature. This is perhaps best expressed when a naked Pauline "lifts her arms, displaying her hairy armpits" and recites:

The temple of my flesh  
 you may take if you wish  
 But my soul shall be  
 Unsullied and free (63).

In this doctrine, the body and the soul cannot be both served.

St. Febronia, the lead in Bianca's play, martyrs

herself to retain her virtue: "Ah, so long as my purity is safe and my virginity is safe I care naught for fires and tortures. Heaven awaits me" (62). While Bianca's motives for retaining her virginity are not religious, she is nonetheless linked to her heroine by the fact that both must fight rape, in Bianca's case figuratively, to retain their individual freedom.

On a more basic level, the tableau explores the development of Pauline and Benjamin, reiterating Pauline's selfishness and further clarifying Benjamin's position with respect to his fiance's wish. Benjamin's last lines express his physical desire and add suspense when he says: "And I am desolate and sick of an old passion,/ Yea hungry for the lips of my desire..." (65). Benjamin's poem suggests that if he marries Bianca it is doubtful that she will retain her virginity for very long.

#### Tableau 12: The Happy Pair!

Tableau 12 begins with problematic stage directions: "This is a 'realistic' scene but not real" (66). From our study of previous tableaux we should understand that 'realistic' refers to genre or style while 'real' refers to the 'real world' of the play as opposed to fantasy or dream world. However, further stage directions indicate that phallic masks are worn and that the guests speak "with the voices of domestic and wild animals", certainly not

characteristic of the realistic mode. Furthermore, if the scene is not real, we have to assume that by Tableau 13 the wedding has either not occurred or at least hasn't occurred on stage. It would appear, therefore, that contrary to the stage directions, the scene is 'real' but not 'realistic'.

Speaking of contemporary Polish theatre, Szydlowski says: "... distortion and grotesque, by virtue of their disparity with a naturalistic photograph of reality, communicate a deep and complete truth about life" (10). In this tableau, the grotesque of "nose-phalluses", Aunt's face covered in down and the guests animal voices (66) serve to convey the notion that marriage is an accepted societal convention which gives license to the fulfillment of natural, animal desires. What becomes important is not the fact that two people are united spiritually, but that two young virgins will be initiated into the pleasures of the flesh. This idea is reinforced by the fact that the entire wedding party hides under the bed to witness the first copulation.

It is, of course, with irony that Rozewicz suggests that the only audible words should be: "The happy pair" (66) since after the others have hidden, Bianca and Benjamin express their contrasting emotions. Bianca dreams of being a woman who is:

beautiful, powerful in her sensuality, saintly in  
her spirit, with a forehead that is such a

strength of thought that she could direct the fate of Athens, while on her lips such delight, and in her look such warm and piercing attractiveness (67).

Benjamin, on the other hand, is consumed by lust and sees women, by extension Bianca, as one of three parts of a "beloved trinity" which also includes wine and snuff (67). Bianca rejects Benjamin's advances, citing the fact that her legs "have grown together" (67). It is interesting to note, however, that she does not reject her femininity since both mythological creatures she has become, the siren and the chimera, are female. Benjamin accepts the rejection out of exhaustion but Bianca's sanity, as well as the sanity of union, is doubtful and suspense is high.

A chorus of voices repeats "mariage blanc" to a crescendo and announces a climactic denouement.

#### Tableau 13: 'I Am'

In the final tableau Bianca adjusts her "splendid hat which is like a garden full of birds and flowers", while Benjamin, as Father had done at the start of the play, reads a newspaper. When Benjamin asks if she is ready Bianca looks at her hat, hears the rustle of the newspaper and understands that her 'mariage blanc' will not prevent her from leading a ridiculous and limited existence. She resolves to destroy the accepted accouterments of womanhood;



she removes and burns each item of clothing, she unpins her hair and cuts it "close to the skin" (69).

When she tells Benjamin, "I am ... your ... brother", she has realized that she cannot live as a woman and have the freedom of choice she desires. The word 'brother' then does not signify that she has become a man, but that she wishes to be Benjamin's equal with the possibilities this entails.

In typical Rozewicz style (Filipowicz, Theatre 2), the playwright has written a play which dwells on problems but which does not offer a viable solution; as Benjamin and Bianca stand motionless and destroyed, it is not hope for a more just existence but pity for injustice which the reader should feel.

CHAPTER II:  
CHARACTER ANALYSIS

While not all directors approach plays in the same manner, character analysis is often a main component of a director's pre-production work. What a director learns about specific characters, their interaction and their place in the play as a whole often enables the former to uncover the play's meaning. In terms of the specific characters of Mariage Blanc, the following analysis provided the portrait which I strove to impart to the actor who would hopefully use this information and his or her interpretive skills as well as creativity to create the character in question.

Several sub-divisions or groupings can undoubtedly be found and justified within the list of characters in Mariage Blanc. These might include: characters most often in interaction; characters belonging to the family; male and female characters; the young and the old. However, one factor which seems to divide the list more appropriately, without denying other subdivisions is the naming of the characters. These can thus be grouped into characters to whom Rozewicz has given generic names and a smaller number to whom he has given individual, proper names. Spencer Golub in his article "The Subject Stripped Bare: Rozewicz's 'Things as Things in themselves'", offers the following rationalization:

"While the characters representing the older generation, locked into conventional roles, are given generic names, those representing the

younger generation and the possibility of revolution in the realms of sexuality and personal identity are given individual names" (27).

While this interpretation is undoubtedly noteworthy, it does not include certain characters whose ages Rozewicz never defines, such as Cook, the Huntsman and the maids. Although all individually named characters are of the younger generation it does not appear that age is an important factor. Thus, the discriminating factor appears to be individuality versus role. Mr. Felix, we will see, is the only character who does not seem to fit this pattern but this may be negligible since the role is very limited and does not add considerably to the action.

Therefore, characters whose names are generic will be analyzed for their role in maintaining the status quo; whereas Bianca, Pauline and Benjamin will be analyzed on a personal psychology basis as well as for their potential to provoke change in the established societal pattern.

#### Bianca

Rozewicz goes to great pains to express the fact that Bianca is not a physical, sensual being. What she lacks physically, however, she gains intellectually. Filipowicz argues that, in fact, Bianca "represents man's intellectual properties" (Theatre 237). Indeed, while Pauline eats and enjoys sensual pleasures, Bianca reads, writes, and thinks.

When Mariage Blanc begins Bianca is a pre-pubescent young girl. We are not told her exact age but know she is older than ten, the age at which her Father stopped dressing her like a boy (54). By the end of the play she has experienced her first period and marriage and we can assume that at least a couple, if not more, years have passed.

While the playwright never physically describes her, except to say that she has "loosely flowing hair" (9), we understand that Bianca is a frail, unhealthy young woman at odds with her own body.

When Bianca describes what she sees as she looks at herself in the mirror she tells us only that her nose is big, her mouth ordinary, her waist three or four feet high and that she is a monster (54). Through this and the expressed opinions of various characters we understand that Bianca is not comfortable with her physical self. Aunt, in Tableau 6, tells us that Bianca is "stiff as a peg" and looks as though "she might have swallowed a stick" (35). Her Grandfather, offering Benjamin advice, tells him not to worry about the fact that Bianca stoops since she is merely doing what many young women do to "try to hide their darling breasts" (57).

From her first appearance we see Bianca as frail and cold. She tries desperately to awaken Pauline so she can "get warm next to [her]" (9). In fact, Pauline reaffirms this when later, talking about Bianca, she tells Benjamin:

"she keeps running to my bed because her hands and feet are cold. She is all cold and sweaty like a dead frog" (64).

Besides her inability to keep herself warm, Bianca's physical frailty is also understood through the fact that she is often ill. In Tableau 4, for instance, Pauline tells Benjamin that Bianca is "often sick, she vomits" (27).

In the eighth tableau, after refusing a chocolate for fear of having "worms incubating in [her] guts" (48), Bianca accepts one after which she must rest her head on Pauline's belly because the candy has made her ill (50). Although we cannot take Pauline literally, we can nonetheless look to her for clues. She tells us, for instance, that Bianca's "belly is full of white worms" (65) and makes the latter sick by insisting that at night these worms "crawl out of [her] nose and ears" (10). Furthermore, Pauline's favorite nickname for Bianca is "slug" which she prefaces with adjectives such as "horrid dead" (10) or "cold" (11).

Thus, Pauline sees Bianca as lifeless, and physically maimed. More specifically, she finds Bianca inadequate as a woman. Because she is a slug, Pauline tells Bianca, she does not have any nipples (14). Later, she tells Bianca that if she were a "real" woman she would have "a hole like a fur hat" and not one that is "hardly big enough for a needle" (60). Talking to Benjamin, she goes even further, telling him that "Bianca has only one opening" (64).

While Golub maintains that Bianca "is her mother, in

the sense that she continues the legacy of female suffering" (25), there is an immense difference between the two. They both deny their sensuality, but Bianca replaces hers with questions while her mother never questions her loss. Bianca denies her physicality, or never develops it, because she understands that being a woman denies freedom; she equates womanhood with suffering and lack of choice.

Her confession reveals her thoughts and proves that she is indeed an individual and autodidact in a society which does not question its traditions:

I don't want to be a girl, I want to be a boy and have a member instead of an opening. I would like to be a soldier when I grow up, and a clergyman now, is that a sin ...? (20)

In analytical terms, this might suggest that it is not womanhood, per se, that she rejects but the lack of choice afforded women. But Bianca is young, inexperienced and alone with her thoughts and ultimately confuses sexuality, which she fears (60), with womanhood.

Although she swears eternal love to Benjamin (68) and her poem regarding their engagement is very passionate about physical awakening (50-1), she wishes her yearning to remain on the page. Indeed, she makes Benjamin promise not to touch her physically (59) for doing so would bring about the denial of her freedom. Undoubtedly, Bianca is a "naive and idealistic dreamer" (Filipowicz, Theatre 236), yet she

must be commended for trying to define her own humanity and place as an individual.

Although she destroys the contents of her trousseau in Tableau 10, it is not until the final tableau that she understands that in marrying Benjamin her "search for humanity" (Blair 13) will not be fruitful and that she must destroy all appearances of femininity in order to gain the individual freedom she desires.

Her last line, "I am ... your ... brother" (69) is, perhaps purposely, ambiguous. Rozewicz states that the character of Bianca is based on one hand on a young writer called Maria Komornicka of the "Young Poland" movement, and Narcyza Zmichowska, a Polish Romantic on the other (see Chapter 3). Filipowicz recalls Komornicka's biography in which there is an account of the writer burning her woman's clothing and declaring: "What do I want? I want to be able to develop my natural capabilities in all spheres of human endeavor" (Theatre 235). While Bianca is not Komornicka, the poems attributed to her are often the latter's which Milosz explains were "quite savage vindications of total freedom for the individual, in this case a superwoman" (342). Thus, in cutting her hair and covering her breasts (69) Bianca rejects her femininity, not to become a man, however, but an individual and equal to Benjamin.

What remains unclear, is to what extent past experiences have been responsible for Bianca's fear of



sexuality and femininity. As previously mentioned, Bianca was rejected by her father when she started to develop as a woman and the stabbing sequence of Tableau 9 suggests that she harbors great pain and anger over the rejection. Furthermore, Bianca seems to have been sexually molested as a child, presumably causing even greater psychological damage. In her confession, Bianca also recalls hearing her mother moan with pain in the arms of Bull-Father (20). Thus, although her quest for freedom of choice is a sound one, it may have been prompted as much by personal experience as by the intellectual pursuit of freedom and justice. As it is often easier for student actors to base characterization on psychological make-up, in this production the focus was placed on an emotional rather than intellectual plane.

The character of Bianca acts as the social conscience in the world of the play. It is she who not only perceives and expresses social injustice, but acts on her perception in an attempt to revolutionize the existing social tenets.

#### Pauline

Filipowicz argues that Pauline "represents the carnal nature of man" (Theatre 237). Indeed, it is evident that Pauline does not have Bianca's intellectual curiosity, academic aptitude or interest in literary endeavors. She yawns openly while Bianca reads the poem she has written about her engagement (51) and even tells Bianca that her

"poetry bores [her] to tears", mocking her with "willows, swallows, ophelias, camellias, roses and poses" (11). While she is interested in Bianca's book about human and animal sexuality, she irritates the latter by mispronouncing "calmel" (13) and "rudders" (14). (It is interesting to note that Bianca, perhaps envious of Pauline's freedom, incorporates the word 'calmel' into her poetry (16).)

Pauline is Bianca's antithesis. She is fat and healthy (9), easily digesting large quantities of food. In fact, during the course of the play she ingests blackberry juice (10), pudding (12), jam directly from the saucer (36), as well as several pastries (36, 47) and chocolates (49). When she declares that she is "blown up like a cow with clover", Bianca tells her it is no wonder since she "eat[s] without stopping all day ... [and her] lips make smacking noises even when [she's] asleep". Pauline replies that she, unlike Bianca, is not a "nymph or a watersprite feeding on poetry and weeds" (50).

Again in opposition to Bianca, Pauline is "a born sensualist who enjoys her burgeoning sexual power with the same gusto that she [ingests] chocolates" (Kroll 115). Indeed, Pauline is uninhibited and absolutely comfortable with her physicality and, more specifically, her feminine body. To Bianca's query about whether or not she has nipples, Pauline does not hesitate to answer affirmatively (14). Displaying her personal freedom and sensuality as

much as her mischievous character, Pauline interrupts Bianca with, "I feel itchy as if an ant had got into my little groove", after which the latter calls her a pig and breaks into tears (31). As the play progresses, her sexuality is fully aroused and she is well aware of her power as she arches her naked bottom towards Benjamin and asks him if he has "gone dumb" (62).

Where Bianca unequivocally represses any sexual awakening, Pauline embraces hers, though perhaps more for the power it provides her than for her own physical pleasure. This is not entirely surprising since there is no evidence to suggest that she takes part in any sexual activity other than with the fetishist Grandfather. Since she does not appear to receive sexual gratification herself, Rhonda Blair concludes: "Thus, Pauline is actually less sexual than Bianca, for Pauline has learned how disassociate herself from her sexual feelings, objectifying her sexuality by manipulating it as a commodity to be traded apart from herself " (17).

However, "The Rehearsal" offers a different conclusion. In this tableau she repeatedly tries to seduce Benjamin without asking for material goods in return. She attempts to put down Bianca in Benjamin's eyes as befits any jealous young girl (64). Although Filipowicz finds Pauline's motives unclear and offers two other explanations --saving Benjamin from disappointment and protecting Bianca -- her last

solution appears more appropriate: to win Benjamin for herself (Theatre 243). This theory is supported by Pauline's flirtatious teasing of Benjamin at the family picnic as soon as Bianca has left them (44), as well as by the rapidity with which Pauline changes the subject each time Bianca tries to discuss Benjamin (Tableaux 8, 10). It is also significant that Pauline's first line in the play is: "I poisoned myself for love of Benjamin" (10).

While she is Bianca's opposite, Pauline is not without vision, reason, and a desire to change existing customs and traditions. Unlike Bianca's, however, her quest is towards the acceptance of the female body as human, gas and sexual desire alike, and not china, jelly and rainbow (52). Pauline deplores the fact that virginity is so precious that saints have died to preserve theirs, while Bianca essentially carries out her own virginal martyrdom.

The most ambiguous aspect of Pauline is her parentage. While Rozewicz calls Bianca her sister in one stage direction (12), later in the play he gives Pauline the line, "I swear on the ashes of my parents" (49), which suggests that her natural parents are dead. Furthermore, Pauline refers to Erasmus as "Bianca's dead little bother [sic]" (64) and not her own. Critics and scholars are divided; Golub (25) and Blair (14) refer to the two girls as sisters while Fik (14) and Filipowicz (Theatre 236) refer to them as friends. We can assume that incest was a taboo subject in

Catholic Poland at the time the play was written and consequently the fact that Pauline's parentage is not clear may be a result of what Rozewicz calls "the censor inside [him]" (qtd. in Theatre 236) or even a regulated form of censorship. Pauline's sexual relationship with Grandfather may have been unacceptable as incestuous. Nonetheless, whatever her parentage, Pauline has obviously been living as a sister to Bianca since early childhood.

The character of Pauline acts as a foil to that of Bianca. Embracing womanhood, Pauline uses her feminine attributes to create her own comfort. Happy to be an object of sexual desire, she will play up her role to its fullest potential.

#### Benjamin

Benjamin, mentioned as early as the first tableau, appears for the first time in Tableau 4: 'Oh Come...'. In his stage directions Rozewicz tells us that Benjamin is "a young man, dressed either in student uniform or in a party dress [sic]" (25). His exact age is not known yet it seems unlikely that he is very young since he tells the girls that he studied at Heidelberg "many years ago", to write a doctoral thesis (43), a fact which is subsequently brought up by Aunt (56). Whatever his actual age, Benjamin is clearly more mature on an intellectual plane than on an emotional one.

Benjamin's language is slightly different than other characters'; it is more complex and flowery. For example, after Bianca is frightened by him he asks Pauline if she has "noticed an untidiness in [his] dress, some departure from the norm" (27). His specific way of speaking points to certain characteristics: he is educated, a poet and interested in language.

Benjamin's poetry in the original Polish text is found in the writings of Narcyza Zmichowska. While Zmichowska wrote in mid-19th Century and the 'Young Poland' movement to which Komornicka belonged began half a century later (Milosz 195-280, 322-79), Rozewicz is not making a distinction between Bianca and Benjamin since Milosz tells us that "the spirit of Polish Romanticism pervaded the modernistic imagination" (342).

Rozewicz does, however, make a very strong distinction between Benjamin and Father, having both men recite poetry of very different styles and content in the same tableau. While Benjamin speaks romantically and metaphorically of death (25), Father recites a choppy, brief homage to life and lust (26). Thus the distinction is made between the poet and the common man, the former carrying the connotation of visionary.

While Benjamin and Bianca are undoubtedly soul mates, they are significantly different. They are both virgins but through different circumstances. While Bianca is terrified

of sexual expression and wishes to live her entire life free of it, Benjamin has remained a virgin through shyness: "For whenever with an unconscious sensual intention I tried to approach a woman I would be thrown into such confusion that everything was lost in it ..." (56). Aroused, he remains loyal to Bianca when Pauline tries to seduce him (64), and sensitive to the former's request for a 'mariage blanc' although he does not understand that Bianca's wish will remain a lifetime commitment (53). If Benjamin does not fully understand Bianca, it is perhaps less an indication of his insensitivity than of Bianca's isolation in a world that is not ready for her thoughts.

Benjamin's final poem, though more eloquent, is reminiscent of the father's in Tableau 4. Seemingly out of character, it is a strong indication that Rozewicz uses Benjamin as a seer of things to come. In Tableau 7, for instance, after having asked for Bianca's hand in marriage (14), he recites a very dark poem evoking "despair and death" after an "overworn" day. Bianca "shudders and shakes herself" (46).

Benjamin does revolt against traditional society, as can be seen by his virginity and acceptance of a 'mariage blanc', but his revolt is less significant than Bianca's. Just as there is no indication that Benjamin has lived outside books and poetry, his revolution also seems to be more intellectual than concrete. Both Benjamin and Bianca

revolutionize literary style (see Chapter 3), however only Bianca matches her literary revolution with concrete physical action.

Although his potential for change is great, Benjamin is, in the end, ineffectual.

#### Mr. Felix

Mr. Felix is first mentioned in Tableau 4 in association with Benjamin: "Grandpa's forgotten that the little lambs ... are not interested to know how the farmer rides, unless they are Benjamin's or Felix's knees." He is evidently present at the time since the subsequent stage directions tell us that "the young men approach the girls" (27).

Mr. Felix is not, however, a poet but a land administrator (46), which Rozewicz tells us in the former's second and only other appearance. In this tableau, "In a Black Wood", Mr. Felix appears in the company of Father with whom he has a double entendre conversation about cattle (41). The pat on the back he receives from Father after this conversation suggests that both men are in agreement and Mr. Felix is liked by Father.

It is incongruous therefore that Mr. Felix has been given a proper name; nothing in his behavior suggests that he is discontent with society as it stands. Though Mr. Felix is also young, he does not wish to upset the status



quo. His function is therefore to place Bianca, Benjamin and Pauline's revolt in perspective; not all younger characters work towards a revolution of societal conventions.

#### Mother

Mother is an unfulfilled woman married to an unsuitable man. The fact that Rozewicz does not use her personal name emphasizes her unhappiness since she is nothing but a mother yet has never found comfort in this role. It also implies that her case is not unique and that she is representative of countless mothers who are never fulfilled in being so. In her inner monologue of Tableau 9 she states : "Despite six cradles, five coffins and nine pregnancies about which you know nothing. I never felt myself a woman carrying you" (55). Again, in her confession she says she has had a "whole life of pregnancies" (23) yet "inside [she] was always empty and cold" (22).

Of the character of Mother, Filipowicz states that she "has accepted [her husband's] lust and oppressiveness in exchange for security and material possessions" (Theatre 236). Indeed, throughout the play this character's conversation rarely sways from her unhappy marriage or her material goods. In her confession she slips from one subject to the other without a pause, complaining about her husband in one breath and instructing Cook on the

preparation of an elaborate meal, "the way Master likes it" (23), in another.

Mother's unhappiness is directly related to her sexual life with her husband. Her choice of words paints a very grim picture as she refers to sexual activity as "giving myself to him", "hell which a married woman finds in the bed of an unloved husband" (22) and again, "I lay under him like a tortured animal" (55). In Tableau 3 it is clear that she sees no end to her torment except death: "Feet off the earth/ along arcs of heaven/ [...]/ I'll fly" (22-23).

Even while death appears to be her only hope, Mother cannot contemplate changing her situation. She did, she tells us, run back to her mother on her wedding night but was apparently returned to her husband. When her sister brings up the subject, Mother automatically responds "don't rake up the embers" (35) or "No use raking up the embers now, they have cooled" (42).

Furthermore, though Aunt points out the similarity between Bianca and her mother, the latter does not believe anything can be done to prevent her daughter's unhappiness. She hangs on to vague hope since she does not perceive action to be an option: "perhaps she will change when she is warmed by the rays of love" (35). While Bianca and Mother are both fearful of sexual activity and Aunt points out other similarities, the resemblance stops there. Bianca will act on her necessity to change her life, whereas her

mother will forever be "tormented by her own frigidity and her husband's insatiability" (Fik 13).

Rozewicz makes another parallel between Mother and Bianca when, in Tableau 3, the former refers to her family life before her marriage. She speaks sympathetically of her only brother Benjamin, who died of whooping cough (22). The identical names of her brother and Bianca's fiance is undoubtedly not coincidental and Rozewicz might be making a parallel between the two. It may also be a poetic device foreshadowing the last scene in which Bianca tells Benjamin she is his brother (69), thereby killing any hope he may have had of a happy life.

Mother's life is not all despair since it is apparent that she does find some relief in clothing (36) and china (18-19) as well as in the preparation of meals and social events. As such, her daughter's wedding and her father's funeral are less significant to her in traditional terms than the etiquette and customs related to these events. Speaking of Grandfather's death she says: "we must remain brave and clear-sighted on his account. After all, buying the material and even the preparation means nothing" (36). Thus, it becomes apparent that Mother wishes to hide her emotions and preserve appearances more than she wishes to find alternate solutions to her and her daughter's lives.

Therefore, the character of Mother parallels that of Bianca and is a concrete expression of Bianca's fate if she

does not go through with her revolt. She embodies the upholding of social and religious customs and traditions, whatever the emotional cost to individuals.

#### Aunt

Like Mother, Aunt also seems to take great pleasure in material possessions, etiquette and customs, but she does not use these to hide her emotions. In Tableau 6 she sends Pauline for some tea so she can speak to her sister about Bianca. She is perceptive and rational when she compares her sister to Bianca and asks: "And did the rays of feeling soften you, warm you up, melt you? "(35). She offers no worthy solution, however, suggesting only that Bianca be more "coquettish".

Since she was married before her sister (42), we can assume that Aunt is a few years older. Filipowicz suggests that Aunt used to be a 'femme fatale' (Theatre 236) yet there is no reference to her physical beauty in the script. Rozewicz does, however, physicalize the fact that Aunt is a sexual woman. In his stage directions to Tableau 9, the playwright says Aunt is "grimacing in a strange way, red lips surrounded with black hair which looks very ambiguous" (56). In the ensuing scene she proceeds to flirt openly with Benjamin, holding his hand and trying to persuade him to free his repressed physical desire (57-58).

This parallel to Pauline is further developed when she

says: "I was never an angel pretending to be gathering violets when I was going about a natural function" (42). This is quite similar to Pauline's diatribe against the condition of women in which she says she wants to "fart like a peasant" to "let the fools see that [she] is human like everybody else" (52).

If Aunt was a 'femme fatale' in her younger days, there may be another parallel to be drawn between her and Pauline. Like Pauline, she may have used her sexuality to gain her freedom; not remarrying following the death of her husband may not have meant a life of celibacy, but one in which she was not subjugated by one man.

The fact that Rozewicz does not use the proper name he has given Aunt and refers to her as a hen (45), an appellation usually reserved for gossipy women, leads us to believe that Aunt is meant to represent a certain kind of woman: the gossip, the advice-giver, and the widowed aunt who gets overly involved in her relatives lives.

#### Father/ Bull-Father

Father is a 56 year old manor lord who, in his first appearance, seems to be interested in current affairs and his agricultural enterprise (Tableau 2). He is unperturbed by his daughter's passionate poetry except for her lack of rationality: "Nolens volens, it doesn't make sense" (17). He is disenchanted with poetic license, rationalizing Bianca's

use of the word "calmel" by stating that "she thinks that this makes her more of a literary person" (17). Always the realist, he is also unimpressed by the dictates of fashion believing only in sound buys (18).

There is, however, a completely different side to Father and, in fact, after the second tableau he most often appears as Bull-Father. In his second appearance, at the confessional, Rozewicz tells us that "Bull-Father is foaming at the mouth, otherwise he looks normal" (20) and later in the play he will wear a full bull's head (46). Bull-Father represents the animalistic, carnal side of Father. The fact that he first appears as Father is undoubtedly meant to put the character in perspective; he is not a horrible aberration, he is a normal father in the world of the play.

After a short confession in which we learn of his inner struggle he is interrupted by Milkmaid whom he feels compelled to chase. Bull-Father's struggle expresses the male perspective within the world of the play: "I despise myself and yet I desire them all" (21). While he expresses guilt for the way he treats his wife and all other women in the household, the force of nature is stronger than his will and wins over in every situation. Thus, his brutishness is blamed on nature and not on himself.

Mother tells us that he "forces himself drunk into [her] bedroom" despite the fact that she has no desire for him (55). In Tableau 3, Cook reveals a chilling account of

the Bull-Father coming at her from behind and, despite her protestations, "takes no notice and gets on with it" (23). When Cook is distraught over the Catholic ramifications of sexual intercourse in this manner, he compares her to a rouble whose sides are the same, thus openly objectifying her as a woman.

His ease in seeing women as objects and nothing else explains his insensitive treatment of his daughter. Bianca tells us that Father wanted her dressed as a boy since he had recently lost his only son (54). However, after building the strong bond which he could only do with a boy, Bianca's feminine body started to develop and her father rejected her, excusing his behavior by pointing out that she had become a "school-girl smelling of buttered roles" (55) and had thus become associated with food, with which women are associated throughout the play. Propriety forbidding him to see his daughter as a sexual object, Father must reject Bianca entirely since he has no comprehension of alternate ways of relating to women.

Father's function is, like Mother's, to maintain the status quo. He represents the conventional Father, free, happy and oblivious to the problems created by conventional society.

#### Grandfather

Grandfather is described by Gussow as a "rapacious old

goat" (43) and by Kroll as a "senile satyr" (115). Indeed, he "desires with all [his] heart, universally, in thought word and deed". Like Father, he too struggles with his conscience though his guilt runs deeper. He has lived with his sins longer and is at the point in his life when he had thought that in old age he would find relief. Fiery and lusty, he imagined he would "immerse [himself] in a deep-blue old age, like a cool crystal spring" (21). Struggle though he may, he is unable to put his carnal side to rest.

His appetite is both sexual and sensual, as he equates sexual temptation to that of raisins, chocolates and fruit-gums, furthering the food analogy by comparing Pauline's bottom to a peach (21). Thus, like his son-in-law, he too objectifies women. This is perhaps best synthesized when he discusses the chicken he is eating: "Well, sir, it's soft, fatty, gooey and delicate. All the best flavors are in the rump, not the head ..." (46).

While he does chase after women (38), his prize prey is Pauline. As we have seen, he and Pauline engage in an unconsummated sexual relationship in which she is the manipulator. Consequently, Grandfather spends his time lugging large gifts across the drawing room in search of the young girl.

Filipowicz maintains that Grandfather is impotent (236), which is supported by the fetishist demands he makes



upon Pauline. This is further supported by the stage directions for Tableau 12 in which we are told all men wear nose-phalluses and Grandfather's is long and wrinkled (66). This minimizes Grandfather's threatening power and he is seen mostly as a comical, senile old fuddy-duddy.

However, if understood in a certain way, Tableau 5: "Blood in the Girls Bedroom", reveals a darker side to Grandfather. As mentioned in Chapter I, he may be St. Nicholas as described by Bianca.

The character of Grandfather represents the struggle between carnal nature and societal dictates within the world of the play. Despite his advanced age, he cannot reconcile the two.

#### Cook

Cook, true to the name given her, speaks mostly of food. In fact, Rozewicz parallels the two when he has her wiping her face, neck and breasts with her apron while speaking of rubbing the roast with garlic or tamarisk (Golub 26).

Cook is also seen as a sexual being when Pauline speaks of her as a real woman with a "hole like a fur hat" (60). This is undoubtedly not unknown to Father who, as we have seen, takes sexual pleasure from her even while she cooks. She is above all a servant, and when she tells her mistress that she is "familiar with the Master's tastes", we know she

refers to sexual activity as well as food. Perhaps her most telling line occurs when she says: "And there I was with that rouble standing and standing ..." (23). She accepts her position as a cook and a woman in both the household and traditional society. It is this acceptance which characterizes her role within the play; despite personal suffering, she does not conceive of another way of life and performs her duties arduously.

#### The Huntsman

The Huntsman appears only in Tableau 7. When Rozewicz tells us that his shape "resembles the stranger's from the previous scene", we understand that he is the same man (41). Though he does not speak, the Huntsman is important as a concrete representation of men in the play; he is the predator. Furthermore, the black cloak he appears in to terrorize Bianca and the dead animals he presumably carries parallel him to death. As we have seen, death is the fate Bianca believes will figuratively and literally (60) be hers if she engages in sexual intercourse.

#### Milkmaid and Wench

Two other characters mentioned are the Wench and the Milkmaid. Neither character is developed and both appear only to be chased by Bull-Father. While we know they run

away from him, we do not know whether it is out of fear and disgust or enticement. For this reason, I opted to have the Milkmaid enjoy sexual activity and the Maid (replacing the Wench for practical considerations) fearful of it. Their function is to reinforce the notion of prey versus predator, whether they take pleasure in the pursuit or not.

**CHAPTER III:**

INTERVIEW WITH TADEUSZ ROZEWICZ

Edited Interview with Tadeusz Rozewicz and his translator Adam Czerniawski at Warwick University on 15 December 1990

GH: When I read Mariage Blanc, or when I work on it, it seems very much a woman's play. So, I'm interested in finding out ... is this a play really about Bianca or the other female characters or a metaphor for something else?

AC: So, two lines of thought, OK? Firstly Tadeusz doesn't see writing in general as having to do with problems, it has to do with the construction of a play, in this case also the language. So, it is how a theme is presented rather than what the theme is. That is the important thing for him. As for the details of whether it might be perceived as having a second layer, he feels that is the kind of answer he can't give in a short interview and he suggests you look up a magazine in English where, among other plays, M. B. is discussed and analyzed in great detail. He's got a copy of this magazine here, if you've got the facility to get a hold of a photocopier while you're here, then this will cover that side of it for you.

GH: OK, that's great, that's fine. I guess the difference though is that ... I've been doing that anyway, reading various articles on analysis, but there's always something in the back of your mind that says that maybe

you're reading something that the author did not put in, did not intend...

AC: I thought you would ... [speaks to TR]

He finds it difficult to talk analytically about a play which is now ten years old. Had these questions come up while he was writing or soon afterwards ... He now finds it difficult to, as it were, reopen the case after all these years. He's saying that, you know, it's not as though he wants to, as it were, be awkward about this. It's just simply the way ...

GH: No, no, I understand ...

AC: ...there's no way that he feels that he can say anything useful at this time.

GH: I suppose THE TRAP is the play that's been written more recently. Maybe we can talk about that one because I certainly, when I read it, did see some similarities ... It would be interesting for me, actually, to know how he felt about the production we saw today ...

AC: Given that we only saw half of it, what he did see ... he was impressed with the way the producer solved the business of presenting characters on stage. He liked the way ... the movement of people ... this was all well integrated and the way the cupboard played the central role. He was impressed with that. He felt that Franz was played on one level, he would have ... he thought that there should have been times when Kafka

behaved like a normal human being, rather than being constantly on this absolutely intense level, that it would have given the character another dimension of course, and made it a more effective production. He thinks this was obviously the producer's shortcoming rather than the actor's.

GH: Yes, yes, I agree. In fact, that's also how I felt. I guess the reason that this [question] was important to me is that our production, in terms of what I've discussed with my designer, is going to be somewhat similar in acting style and also design and production values. [...]

One thing they talked about yesterday at some point, in terms of themes ... the woman who was talking about theatre, the editor of DIALOG ... [Malgorzata Semil] was talking about how the Polish public wasn't ready to accept plays that dealt with ... that maybe were going to be offensive to the religious or Catholic background. Now I see (again this is a question of theme and I hope you can answer) ... I'm wondering what place Catholicism has in MARIAGE BLANC ... What role does he see religion playing?

AC: Well, yes. He sees it not so much as a Catholic theme but a theme of two generations---their attitudes to sex, the old and the young. And, you realize the play is not contemporary, the setting is at the turn of the

century when the succession is to [ ] kind of literature and art was involved. The sex was a powerful element and drive, and the language in which the play was written reflects, points to the direction of that period. And again young ones were shocked by the older generation, by their constant harping on the importance of sex. What I did, actually, in translating the play ... you may recall there are one or two characters, possibly more than one ...

GH: Benjamin and Bianca ...

AC: Yes, and what I did, rather than ... Tadeusz is quoting poems from that period ... what I've done, I've used English texts, equivalent English texts, rather than trying to ... texts or poems with a similar kind of theme, similar language, a similar ...

GH: So the poems are real poems?

AC: Yes, they are real Polish poems and I've used real English poems. [...] They were actually published. There may have been a couple of lines, I haven't really looked at the play for years, but there may have been--there probably are--other pieces of dialogue where ... He emphasized right at the beginning that language is what matters so there is a fair amount of this harking back and, as I say, with specific quotations from that time.

GH: Can he then maybe elaborate on how language is



important besides the poetry? Because I suppose that's something, in terms of a translation, that's little bit difficult to get across.

AC: Yes well, again, let's leave the translation so that we can talk at the end. So, language... (talks to TR)

Right, well [\_\_\_ \_\_\_] slightly towards a wider issue of, not just language pointing to a particular direction but literary traditions that the play draws on, certain Polish classics of the 19th Century. There is the celebrated scene, Adam Mickiewicz's ... does that name mean anything to you? He was a great romantic poet who wrote an epic poem actually called Pan Tadeusz where the setting is in a Polish manor house and it's a kind of glorified pastoral view. Mickiewicz wrote it in Paris when Poland was already an occupied country. So he was recalling his childhood at the turn of the century and there is, among other ... it's a very good, splendid story. It's very well told. It's a great classic and there is a scene where the hero, Pan Tadeusz, is talking to Telimena, one of the women in the ...

TR: Zosia ...

AC: ... in the story ... There is a hunt, no, there going mushroom picking ... and the girl, or she's an older woman, so ... she's trying to seduce Pan Tadeusz, the young student straight from university. And so instead

of going mushroom picking they go off and ... you can imagine what happens. So the ... and there are other elements which, I should say, hark back to the 19th Century of the Polish manor house: the maidens ... you know, as well living a very confined life with a kind of, underneath, a kind of sexual explosion ready to come to the fore. Another character is a woman called Zmichowska who was one of the first feminists (presumably she was a lesbian but it's not clear). Anyway, she was a kind of model for the character in the play. So, in conclusion to this question, Tadeusz says that what he is doing is really pointing you in certain directions and that you really have to follow that up. You know, in a short conversation you can't really go to the detail ...

GH: No, no, I know ...

AC: ... but he's pointing you in certain directions and asks that you look it up. [...] Narcyza Zmichowska. She wrote a novel called THE PAGAN WOMAN. [...] (TR speaks)

Yes, there is another model, a woman called Maria Komornicka, and she was one of the poets at the turn of the century, you know, the Successionists. But these people were known as 'Młoda Polska', 'Young Poland' they called themselves. [...] And she published her work in the leading literary magazine of the time

called the Chimera. And she ... came from a landed gentry family and began to, according to the family, began to behave more and more oddly and one of the oddities that ... eventually made them send her to a madhouse was the fact that she dressed as a man and she signed her poems with a male pseudonym. And she said once ... she's quoted as saying she wasn't a woman, and you may recall that's what's at the end of the play, that's what's said. So she's another, ... literary model for what's her name in the play.

GH: Right. OK. Maybe just one last question: in terms of the ending of the play [...] I read an article at some point that said that when Mariage Blanc was done in the United States Mr. Rozewicz [...] had worked with the director and had asked him to change the ending, that instead of cutting her hair she was to take a knife or something and stab herself in the groin and that's how the end of the play came about. Now, the ending ... is what attracted me to the play, that last scene. But, I'm wondering how drastic he sees this last scene or, in fact, is it that she is saying: 'I am not a woman' ... whereas we were taking it more, my designer and I, to mean: 'I am not going to be a woman under these circumstances. I don't want to be a woman in this kind of society.' Is it that or is it saying: 'No, I don't feel like a woman at all'?

AC: Yes, right. So there are two related questions. One, the actual bit of physical gesture ... how drastic that is suppose to be. (Talks to TR)

On the question of whether it's within a social context or in general, he's happy to say that it's level, it's not particularly important. What he ... you see he sees the play as a gradual descent into madness and, for that reason, he certainly doesn't want any melodramatic gestures and ... The story that you've just told us is actually the reverse of what happened, namely that all the productions that he's seen or knows about, except for the Wajda which he doesn't know, all the producers have gone for the stronger gesture of using the scissors as a knife and he sees this as totally wrong. What one wants is a very methodical, quiet, cutting of the hair.

GH: That's good. That's what I want too. [...] I want it to be the most simple scene in the play. It ends on this very simple note of somebody who's completely naked and just cutting her hair.

AC: Right, right. (Tells TR)

So, is that, do you think it all ...

GH: Yes, I think that will really help me a lot actually and ...

AC: And, you know, if you want to talk about this further, fine. But I think the next thing we ought to do is to

... I'll take Tadeusz back to ... his room.

GH: I have really [only] one question on translation and ... if you think you can ...

AC: Yes, yes, let's do it now, let's do it now.

GH: I'm interested in knowing, when you're translating a Polish play like this ... Now do you ... try to ... leave it as a Polish play that is in another language or do you, in some way, try to minimize the Polishness?

AC: Yes, well let me put it like this. Obviously it depends, you know, on the kind of play it is. I thought in this context using English equivalents was just about right. A model which I picked up years and years ago was when I listened, when I heard on British radio, a production of Tchekov's Cherry Orchard which was transferred to a setting near Dublin in Ireland. And obviously the producer felt that Dublin, Ireland was somehow ... it stuck in my mind as an interesting idea. But I think at first, you see, I was very unsure of myself in terms of whether a foreign audience could take the specificity of Polish drama, especially the Romantics, the great people like Mickiewicz, Slowacki and so on. They, and Wyspianski later on ... there is so much concern with Polish things and I thought well, if people want to find out about ... want to see a Polish play or read a Polish play, you know, they'll have to do a bit of homework. And they want us ...

when you read Aeschylus or Chinese poetry you have to have some kind of background. And so why should we make it any different in the case of the Polish? After all, the interest is partly that the theme is universal but there must be, presumably, ... what makes it interesting is that there is a very specific Polish side to it. So, in very general terms, I would answer in this way. I have, in recent years, been thinking of translating Mickiewicz's great play called the Forefather's Eve which is an immensely Polish piece. It's historical and naturally in Polish history you have to know mythology, Catholicism, all sorts of elements which are very, very specific to the Polish historical situation. And yet it's a very powerful drama and I think, if well translated, people will be ... persuaded to fall in love ... And I think you go ... have to go to a Shakespeare play the first time ever and ...

GH: Well, you never lose track of where a play is from when you ... I mean I can't ... in terms of Mariage Blanc ... lose track of the fact that it was written by a Polish writer when I work on it. Do you think this play, Mariage Blanc, is specifically Polish?

AC: I would ... Perhaps I could just ask Tadeusz.

Yes, Tadeusz replies on the general theme that, you know, let the reader or spectator do a bit of homework

or struggle a bit. But, on the other hand, he's also quite happy when it's better to find equivalents for sayings or certain kinds of equivalents. If there is a good equivalent, use it. On the general theme of the play, again, he stresses the iconography, as it were. Mushroom gathering is such a Polish thing, you know, everybody goes mushroom gathering. It's traditional. And he also draws a bit of attention to the fact that the play within the play, Benjamin and Bianca's ... he's using an even earlier text in Polish. There are the Lives of Saints by a famous Polish cleric, [Skarga], whose sermons were ... he was a Jesuit ... (TR speaks)

Tadeusz recalls the premiere of the play in Paris where the Polish manor house was replaced with a Mexican hacienda and they had, instead of a Polish forest, they had some kind of Central, Southern American jungle ala, you know, the paintings of Henri Rousseau. Do you know his paintings? He had that kind of feeling. And so, as far as he was concerned, and the Poles in the audience, this was a total shock. It didn't make sense. Whereas Tadeusz thinks that probably the French audience couldn't care less, one way or the other. So, you know ... I think if you were to follow Tadeusz's preference he would obviously prefer to see it in the context of the Polish setting because, in the end, it

is meaningful. It has a kind of social background which may not have been the same in Central America, and he's not a Central American writer so that becomes crazy, to transpose the iconography.

GH: Well, you can assure him that I have every intention of ...

AC: So it will be preferable to signal that this is happening in Central Europe rather than in China or Peru ...

GH: Yes, I think it will be. I don't think he needs to worry about that! (TR speaks)

AC: Tadeusz would be happy if you could keep him abreast, mainly if there are any ... if you could send a program ... a few photographs and a copy of the written bit of your thesis because there is someone in Poland who keeps an eye on the documentation of what happens to his work all over the world. So, anything of that kind, he would be glad to have.

GH: That would be great. Thank you so much for your time.



CHAPTER IV:  
WORKING IN EQUAL PARTNERSHIP

One of the most perplexing moments I encountered during the hoopla of opening night occurred when I spoke to my mother during the intermission. As I scrutinized her face for dearly desired signs of approval, I was met instead with an innocent, yet most annoying question: "What exactly did you do on this show?". I rolled my eyes, flapped my arms and gave her the best answer I could come up with: "I directed it!". Feeling guilty about my irritation, the following day I asked my mother to read the script and compare it to the production and she would have the answer to her question. Not only was this unfair to my mother, it was acutely pretentious. The correct answer would have been that my process had involved four separate, yet interactive and often simultaneous processes, each involving the communication and cooperation between myself as director and one or more individuals. The first step was script analysis, the second communication with designers and specialists, the third communication with actors during the rehearsal process, and the fourth communication with technicians.

This chapter will deal with the second process involving set and costume designer, Lesley Preston, lighting designer J. James Andrews, sound designer John Bent Jr., as well as composer Todd Johnson and choreographer Denise Clarke. I will endeavor to discuss the process between myself and these individuals, as well as the outcome of

these processes, in relation to the final production.

## Set and Costume Design

### Process

Before Lesley Preston and I had our first official meeting, we had ongoing discussions in Craigie Hall hallways, the cafeteria, and over the phone for several weeks. We were concerned with two scenes which we felt required particular attention for practical reasons and these discussions marked the beginning, unorthodox though it may have been, of our cooperative process. The most problematic of these scenes is Tableau 13 in which Bianca not only strips herself bare but cuts off all her hair. The second occurs in Tableau 10 when Bianca deliberately tears, rips, cuts and shreds the entirety of her trousseau. Both scenes are crucial to the progression of Bianca's disenchantment and eventual breakdown and both are problematic in budgetary terms. Our solution to the problems presented by both of these scenes would involve choosing one of three alternatives: a realistic portrayal of the action described in the text, a stylized portrayal of the same action or a substitute action which would convey the same meaning.

Once we had solved these two scenes to our satisfaction, Lesley and I had our first official meeting in

mid-October, in which I was to outline the importance I attributed to the script and in which direction I felt the set and costume design should go. I focused my attention on four aspects of the play which struck me as central at the time : the titles of the tableaux, oppositions, imagery and politics.

After this first official meeting we had several official and unofficial discussions in which we reiterated and clarified some of these points and added others but it wasn't until late November that we had a major breakthrough.

Having previously set the last Friday in November for a meeting, we decided that we were both too tired and opted for postponement and a drink at the Grad Lounge instead. However, as soon as we had ordered our drinks we began to discuss the play and this became the most decisive, creative and exciting meeting we would have. Thinking back on this meeting I realize that although we did not know it, Lesley and I were very clear on the concept and ready to make the decisions we had been afraid of previously. Perhaps the informal setting liberated us from the task and freed our creativity. It was in these few hours that we decided on the large white drop and black dust covers, the red length of fabric, the helium penis trees, the phallic mushroom, and the porcelain penis which we later abandoned.

Obviously this meeting was crucial to the final production but also an expression of the wonderfully

cooperative nature of the process between Lesley and me. Ideas were mutually expressed, expounded upon, changed and added to and when it was all over I could not remember which ideas had come from whom and it was inconsequential.

After this fruitful meeting Lesley and I had finalized the conceptual portion of our set designer/ director relationship and although our work was not over, we now had to deal only with its more pragmatic aspects. Lesley designed costumes as well as the set for this production however both processes were very much interconnected and discussions solely about costumes were infrequent. In fact, many of our decisions about costumes were arrived at while discussing the set.

#### Concept

We focused our attention on Tableau 13. My initial response was that I did want a realistic portrayal of the action described by Rozewicz, as I remembered that this scene was crucial to my having proposed Mariage Blanc for my thesis production. However, staging this scene would require ten to twelve wigs which would consume a considerable portion of our budget. Lesley's concern was that the size of the remaining budget would restrict her freedom to design as many costumes as she would like in the manner in which she would like to design them. Although the image of a solitary woman cutting her hair was very

powerful to me and I could not let go of it easily, I understood Lesley's concerns and was ready to look for alternate ways to suggest the same turmoil, defiance, fear and strength.

Czerwinski writes that when Mariage Blanc was produced at the Slavic Cultural Centre Rozewicz worked very closely with director Kazimierz Braun and was present during the rehearsal period. Rozewicz was not happy with the last scene and asked Braun to find a more powerful image. The director opted to have Bianca pull out a pair of scissors but, instead of cutting her hair, stab herself in the crotch (48; Rozewicz recalls his side of the story in Chapter 3). Although this image is very powerful, after a brief discussion Lesley and I concluded that it was too severe, final and irrational.

This decision having been made, we began discussing the possibilities of stylization with financial considerations in mind. We toyed with the idea of gigantic prop scissors which could remove a hairpiece in its entirety in one stroke, hair extensions braided into the actor's real hair, or braided into a wig and several other stylized versions of hair cutting. Although I tried to be open-minded, my feeling throughout these discussions was that the emotional impact of this scene would be minimized by a stylized approach. The emotion I wished this scene to convey was a juxtaposition of tremendous vulnerability and strength. I

also wanted to be clear that this was a real action; I wanted the audience to know that Bianca had indeed cut her hair and not only dreamt about it. It was also extremely important for me that the audience not be conscious of budgetary restraints and I felt that most stylized versions would point to this fact. The further we progressed in our discussions the clearer it became that this scene needed to be grounded in reality and simple in terms of production values; we would need ten wigs and Lesley set out to find the right product for the right price. Arriving at this decision became a key to our understanding of the stylistic demands of the play and the center from which our concept evolved.

We went through a similar but much quicker and easier process for the problematic action of Tableau 10. From the start I acknowledged that realism was not necessary to the significance of Bianca's desire to destroy the contents of her trousseau. It was not imperative that Bianca do the action as much as it was important that she want to do it. In fact, I felt that having Bianca actually destroy the contents of her trousseau might give away her rejection of the wedding too soon and lessen the impact of the last scene. We decided on the shadow play without great deliberation and were both content with the ambiguity this segment would deliver. The audience would understand that Bianca wanted to destroy the contents of her trousseau

whether they believed she had actually done it or not.

At first the fact that Rozewicz or perhaps Czerniawski labeled the thirteen scenes tableaux was very significant. It dictated the manner in which each scene would be presented. Perhaps because of my knowledge of the French language, the word 'tableau' suggested painting or other two dimensional art work. 'Scene', on the other hand, suggests dramatic action from introduction through development to resolution. In the second instance the action might provide the distinction of the scene whereas in the first instance the distinguishing feature might be the sensation provided by the scene -- what is perceived by the senses: sight, smell, touch, taste and hearing. The connotation and use I attributed to the word 'tableau' became very important to the way I envisioned the entire production.

Thus, I felt that Rozewicz had titled each of his scenes for a reason and that it was important to extend this characteristic to the staged version of his play. Each tableau has a specific title which I feel expresses the core of the scene, in some cases more obscurely than in others. "Blood in the Girl's Bedroom" not only expresses Bianca's first menstrual cycle but also informs her vision of St. Nicholas. Blood is central to the tableau in the present as well as in the past and this tableau's distinctive scenic element, the red length of fabric, was derived from this knowledge. "Wedding and Mourning" on the other hand



intertwined preparations and discussion of both rituals in the title so closely, that I felt compelled to physicalize this notion by mirroring the action of Aunt and Mother despite their obvious differences in character. Fortunately Lesley had also picked out the titling as an important feature and seemed quite happy with my suggestion. We determined, therefore, that each scene would be titled for the audience but reserved judgment on the manner in which this would be done, knowing that each scene would call for its own style of titling.

Our discussion of the tableaux as separate entities led to a brief discussion of style. Lesley inquired about my intention regarding this subject and I was ill-prepared to discuss it. Ill-prepared not because I hadn't given it any thought, of course, but because I could not conjure a cohesive image of the whole show. I had, however, visual images of various segments of the script and each was stylistically very different from the other. In fact, we never determined the style of the entire production, innately adhering to the concept that each scene needed to be dealt with separately and its style evolve to a whole rather than be pre-determined.

Lesley did, understandably, press for more precision and proceeded in a somewhat eliminatory style. She asked if it was realism, to which I could easily reply that it wasn't although some scenes were more realistic than others. She

then asked if I wanted a real Polish manor house with real walls and doors. I didn't, however I thought the props should be real. Lesley then put my thoughts into words determining that the set should be non-realistic on the outside and gain realism as the furniture and props moved in closer to the actors. In other words, we wanted a real tea set and table upon which to lay it, but no walls, windows and doors to determine the room in which it was set.

As we have seen in earlier chapters, Mariage Blanc includes many and varied oppositions; Rozewicz opposes sterility to fertility, death to life, intellectuality to sensuality, cold to warmth, men to women, young to old. Although our discussion on this matter was brief and the oppositions I mentioned were hardly exhaustive, the inherent or perceived oppositions in the text became a major component of the set as well as the costume design.

In terms of the set design, Lesley's use of levels and flats created an angular, harsh, dark and menacing environment. Within the confines of this environment she juxtaposed the light, fluffy and comfortable beds of the girl's bedroom, creating the sharp contrast of an island of innocence, purity and virginity in which Bianca and Pauline developed according to their particular perspectives.

The flats which surrounded the main playing area as well as the manner in which they were wrapped was also based in opposition. With one exception, each flat was draped in

either black plastic or black fabric or a combination of both. Beneath the draping on two of the flats lumps of indefinite shape were secured and in several cases rope served to bind everything together. This concept is two-fold: bondage and protection. While it is true that a preliminary observation might perceive bondage first, a more in-depth analysis of the materials used would hopefully lead the observer to perceive protection. Although environmentalists have recently begun to disparage plastic, this material has been cherished by North Americans for a more than a decade as the ultimate in protection. Protection against bacteria, germs, dirt, rot, freezer burn and the list goes on and on. On the other hand, plastic bags have always come with an unwritten warning, "Keep out of the reach of children, failure to do might result in death by suffocation." Similarly, while all the female characters in Mariage Blanc are protected by men and by each other, in Bianca's as well as her Mother's case this protection has led to suffocation of personal desires and inner life.

In the final product, opposition was also central to the motif of dust covers which was integral to the design concept. I am referring specifically to the black dust covers which covered the table, piano and easel at the top of the show and were gradually removed, as well as the large white drop which covered the stage for the last two tableaux. Where dust covers protect furniture from dust and

the elements, they also carry the weight of generations, traditions and customs. I am referring now to the connotation (perhaps personal) of a dust cover rather than its denotation. While there is no reason why dust covers could not be used by people from all walks of life, in my mind their use is clearly associated with 'old' money and priceless furniture which has been passed on from generation to generation. This connotation brings with it its inherent contradiction; while the dust covers protect the furniture on which they are used, this protection prevents the possibility of change. Old furniture is held onto and revered while new designs are looked down upon as incapable of living up to former standards, or worse, their existence remains unsought and unknown.

This contradiction parallels the contradiction affecting the character of Mother. While it was for her protection and security that she was given away to her husband to be married, Mother never found the well-being she was expected to find and has therefore spent her life bemoaning her unhappiness and her disgust for her husband. Yet, when Bianca shows unmistakable signs of apprehension at being given away in marriage herself, her Mother turns a deaf ear and blind eye to her daughter's reactions and proceeds with the established convention. Thus, the tradition must be upheld at the expense of yet another individual. Just as the dust covers are a barrier to an

updating of furniture design, so too is the upholding of traditions, conventions and customs a barrier to new and possibly more appropriate ways of life.

Besides the dust cover interpretation, the large white drop signified the importance of the wedding bed to both Bianca's elders and herself, although diametrically opposed. The sheer size of the drop provided the exaggerated, somewhat perverse pleasure I perceived the adults took in the initiation of the wedding night. It also provided the poetic beauty of Bianca's dream of a marriage blanc, an unconsummated wedding which would leave a white, unsoiled sheet in the morning. By having all the actors except the young couple under the drop, I tried to convey both of these meanings; while the actors' placement under the drop, or bed sheet, hopefully captured the voyeurism of Peeping Toms, once they had been covered for a few seconds the couple seemed alone and Bianca could pursue the idealism of her 'mariage blanc'.

Blood became very prominent in the actual set design. It flowed from a hole in one of the flats adjacent to the girl's bedroom and splattered onto a good portion of the set's floor. The hole from which it flowed was originally meant to be a fireplace but took on more significance when Lesley decided on a circular shape. While it remained a fireplace its circular shape also represented the vagina from which emanated menstrual flow. For me the hole was

also very significant to the hunting motif, representing a deep wound from which blood flowed freely. Its placement in the island of virginity of the girl's bedroom contributed to this meaning making danger imminent to the young and innocent.

The concept behind the red length of fabric which we came to call 'the blood cloth' was much simpler. The stage directions in Tableau 5 after Pauline's exits state: "Bianca stands motionless, her arms along her sides. Suddenly, with quick movements she pulls off the sheets and stuffs them into the stove" (29). However, this was not sufficient for me. I wanted to express not the reality of the situation, in which case the stage directions might have been adequate, but Bianca's perception of the situation. In other words I wanted to express Bianca's feelings about the blood more concretely, and felt the need to have her engulfed by her own blood. Thus, the blood cloth became the blood as well as the soiled sheet. The section on Denise Clarke later in this chapter will elaborate on the final use of this prop.

Arriving at certain choices for the setting of "In a Black Wood" was not an easy task. The stage directions call for scenery that is "almost operatic" and also speaks of "a fairy tale forest" with "gigantic fairy-tale size [mushrooms]". Also included in Rozewicz's description are black treetops, tree trunks green ferns, black undergrowth, and several different kinds of multi-coloured toadstools

(40-41)

'Fairy tale' suggested playfulness, enlargement, colour and magic whereas 'operatic' suggests ominousness as well as large-scale. We discussed whether we wanted to represent a forest or whether we wanted to represent a forest as seen through the eyes of Bianca. We opted for the latter and decided to emphasize Bianca's fear and obsession with phalluses. Having reached this decision we knew that we wanted the trees to take on the characteristics of penises while still representing trees. However, the prospect of having stagehands carry the trees onstage was undesirable to both of us. We wanted the effect to be magical, and brain-stormed until we came up with the idea of helium filled balloons covered with chiffon which were, luckily, difficult but feasible.

The shape, size and make up of the "ithyphallus impudicus" (44) was arrived at from a painting in French Eroticism, in which a young woman dreams of playing with a penis as large as herself (Lorenzoni 62). Besides having a specific look, we wanted the mushroom to be flexible and have a movable head which could be pulled off and destroyed on stage every night; foam and papier mache were used.

While most of our initial ideas were subsequently modified, only one was discarded altogether: a six foot, hand-held, white penis resembling porcelain. Initially, this prop was to serve to illustrate Bianca's three

hallucinations in Tableau 4. Each time Bianca imagined large, threatening phalluses on her grandfather and Benjamin, a 'puppeteer' would maneuver the prop to protrude from behind the scrim, under the scrim, onto the set and even into Bianca's bed. However, we had also discussed the use of slides to this end and once rehearsals were under way I realized that for a less farcical and more dramatic effect the latter would be more appropriate. I knew that I would remain dissatisfied if I let it go and brought it up at our first lighting meeting with Jim Andrews. Fortunately, Jim agreed that the scene would be farcical if we used the penis and Lesley, though disappointed, agreed to go with a rapid succession of slides instead.

For better or worse, despite this change, what Gussow wrote about the Yale production could undoubtedly have been applied to ours: "The Yale prop shop must have been working overtime making sexual symbols" (43).

In my interview with Rozewicz (Chapter 3) he made it clear that one of Mariage Blanc's themes was the clash of generations. Costumes became a concrete way to expose this theme visually. A major component of the costume design concept was therefore the decision to leap several years between the costumes of the younger generation and those of the middle generation. Grandfather was given a more or less timeless look due to the fact that his concerns, though in



many ways more universal than those of other characters, carried little weight within the family dynamics. Mother, Aunt and Bull-Father were placed in the late 1870's whereas Bianca, Pauline and Benjamin were costumed according to the fashion of the late 1890's. This decision was based on the hope that an exaggerated difference in fashion trends would be easily read by audience members unfamiliar with costume history.

Identical costumes were chosen for Bianca and Pauline on the basis that these would be incongruous with their obviously dissimilar personalities. Adjustments with respect to fit, wearing style and breakdown of the costumes were meant to bring out the girls' respective personalities. The white ruffles and lace aimed at exposing Bianca's innocence and virginity on the one hand and Pauline's voluptuousness and sensuality on the other.

Lesley and I agreed quite early on that we did not want to include costume changes consistent with the progression of time, with one exception. Whereas most characters gained or lost accessories consistent with scene changes such as hats and sweaters for the outdoor setting of Tableau 7 and nightgowns for nighttime scenes, we wanted to mark Bianca's passage into womanhood by a more complete costume change. By the addition of a long white skirt, a change in hairstyle and a large replica of the wedding cake as her hat we attempted to physicalize Bianca's mounting psychological

discomfort with the impending wedding. We hoped that this mature attire would clash with Bianca's childish body and persona and the audience would recognize her unease. By the same token, the comical nature of the hat was meant to expose the ridiculousness of a wedding that was not desired by the bride.

Mother and Aunt's costumes were accurate with respect to period, however their decoration was significant to the characters rather than to history.

Intent on exposing Mother's essence, Lesley decided to concretize the latter's materialism and obsession with appearance by concentrating on specific props. These were Mother's china , referred to specifically in "Glass and China", and the petits fours which had been previously chosen for their embodiment of Mother in this production. The highly decorated exterior and bland, spongy interior of petits fours seemed perfect to mirror Mother's inner dissatisfaction yet content outer appearance. Mother's skirt became the paper in which petit fours are presented, the buttons on her bodice miniature replicas of the cakes themselves and her hat a smaller version of the plate of petit fours used in Tableaux 2 and 6. Lesley repeated the bondage theme of the set design by restricting Mother's movement using a criss-crossing of vinyl strips applied over her skirt and on which the china pattern had been reproduced. The overall line was clean, lean, angular and

constricting.

Aunt's silhouette, though freer and more curved, was similar to Mother's but the decoration of her costume was based on the hen motif described by Rozewicz. To this end a goldish yellow was chosen as the main colour for the bodice and skirt. Brown feathers protuded from the neckline, wrist and hem of the skirt to suggest that Aunt's body was, in fact, covered in feathers. In this case as well the bondage motif was upheld by drapings of feathers and earthy coloured fabric applied over the skirt and bodice. The hat continued the hen motif with the application of feathers, beady black eyes and a beak pointing down and forward over the Aunt's forehead.

All the elements of Cook's costume aspired to our conception of a steriotypical cook. As such the actor was padded to look round and maternal and her earthy peasant costume was adorned by a large, dirty apron. A belt from which hung several kitchen utensils served to further the image both visually and audibly as the latter swung and clanked with every step.

Although Maid and Milkmaid also wore earthy peasant costumes the main prupose of these was to frame nude, fake buttocks and breasts respectively. Essentially these roles were narrowed down to what the Grandfather says about women, what the Bullfather does to women and contemporary slang which refers to sex from a heterosexual male perspective as

'tits and ass'. The inspiration was also provided by a Victor Adam watercolour entitled "Country Morals" (Lorenzoni 58) in which a couple walks towards the horizon while the girl's skirt is hiked to her waist and the young man fondles her bare buttock. Milkmaid was arranged in particular states of undress for many of her entrances while Maid, less enthusiastic about sexual pleasures, was given only one costume change which introduced a Spanish theme for the torreador choreography of Tableau 9.

The concept for the men's costumes originated with the Bull-Father. Red and black became the basic male colours for their association with bulls and bullfighting. Father was given a padded chest to remain continuously associated with the bull even at times when he was not wearing the full bull mask. The exact points chosen for the wearing of the Bull mask were partially decided by Rozewicz's stage directions as well as a natural development of the rehearsal process.

Various shades of red and black were used for all male characters with the exception of the Huntsman. Benjamin, on the other hand, retained the black and red but was given a romantic and soft look by the addition of a long, full beige duster.

The concept for the Huntsman's costume did not stem from the Bull-Father but rather from his own name and function. He was given an outdoor hunting outfit which was

completed with the black cape of death, a rifle and several dead animals.

### Sound Design

The sound for Mariage Blanc was arrived at through the cooperation of two very competent and involved individuals: composer Todd Johnson and sound designer John Bent Jr. Having never worked with a composer I was somewhat unclear on the division of responsibilities between the above positions; however, in the end the process was a collaborative effort between the three of us.

### Process

I heard of Todd's interest in this production through Brian Smith who had worked with him the previous season on The Government Inspector. Since we had never met, Todd and I agreed to do so in early December to get to know each other and ascertain our compatibility. The meeting was positive and exciting from the start and we agreed to work together.

I gave Todd a copy of the script pointing out the areas where I felt music should be involved. I also let him know that these were very flexible and I encouraged his input. As we discussed production style Todd's main concern seemed to be whether or not I was interested in using non-period

and nontraditional music. He explained that he worked mainly with electronic studio composition and I assured him that I was interested in a mixture of styles which would allow for this type of music.

Upon my return to school in January I discovered that I no longer had a sound designer. Fortunately, John promptly decided to fill the position despite not requiring any course credits; he wanted to work on the production and gain experience. After going through the script with him I gave him a short list of sound cues excluding music which I thought would form the bulk of his design work.

However in the meantime the sound list grew considerably and Todd became involved in several other projects. It became apparant that he would not be able to compose all the necessary pieces and that the scope of John's involvement would expand to include much of the music. By mid-February I still had not heard any of Todd's compositions and I expressed my fear that he would abandon the project; he assured me that he would not and stuck to his word.

At approximately the same time I made a comprehensive chart listing all sound, light and slide cues, as well as their characteristics, which I distributed to John and Todd, amongst others. It was resolved that Todd would write music for Tableaux 3, 5, 7, 9 and 10 and John would tape the remainder. With one exception, this decision was adhered

to.

The sound production process was a very positive one despite a few tense moments at the end of February. Cooperative creativity and flexibility allowed for changes in process and conception which led to what I considered a very solid product.

### Concept

The concept for sound was arrived at in much the same way as was the set design; each tableau as well as each scene within these tableaux was studied independantly. No pattern was ever set with respect to period, style or genre, nor in determining when sound should or should not be used. For example, it was never determined that music should cover all scene changes or that music composed in the late 1890s or 1990s should be used throughout.

It was determined, however, that sound should never be used as a background or enhancement tool but should be integral to the scene in which it was heard. Sound would therefore set the pace and mood of a particular scene to the same degree as would the lighting or the acting; sound should answer to lighting as lighting to the actor and so on.

This would not, however, necessarily lead to harmony between production elements; in many cases the convergence of elements was meant to create dissonance. In The shifting

Point, Peter Brook describes what I felt was required:

When the Surrealists talked about the meeting of the umbrella and the sewing machine, they had something. A play is the meeting of opposites. This is theatrical harmony. Coziness is discord.  
(54)

The most blatant example of this became the entry into post-show music which John and I stumbled upon while working in the sound booth. Having chosen the "Tea for Two" segments which would be used in Tableau 2 we let the tape run its course as we discussed other matters. Our discussion ended abruptly as the music rose to a crescendo and the choir sang: "We will raise a family/ a boy for you, a girl for me/ Can't you see how happy we will be!" We both laughed at the naivety of the words and John joked about using this to close the show. I was laughing at his suggestion when it occurred to me that that was precisely what should be done. Later, in a moment of great creativity John heard a very dark Mozart elegy which he flawlessly spliced to the last note of this portion of "Tea for Two". This cue was played after several seconds of silence in which the actors extricated themselves from the white drop to stare at Bianca's naked body and shorn head, to which Jim Andrews added a lime green backdrop. This became our most successful attempt at dissonance and my favorite sound cue.

Typically, Todd's original compositions tended towards



harmony of production elements. That is to say that while his compositions were contemporary and often dissonant within themselves the mood engendered was concordant with the dramatic action, the choreography, the lighting and the scenic elements. Perhaps what came to be called 'the blood dance' best illustrates this point. Having decided on the 'blood cloth' with Lesley, I asked Todd for a piece which crescendoed to darkness and discord. Using Todd's composition Denise Clarke choreographed a dance in which Bianca became progressively entangled in the length of red fabric while the lighting diminished in intensity and area and took on an eerie red glow. Thus, all elements combined harmoniously to achieve what I felt to be a strong and clear expression of Bianca's state of mind.

#### Choreography

Since my arrival in Calgary in 1988 I have been a regular audience member of ONE YELLOW RABBIT productions. I have been impressed time and again by the incorporated movement in their theatre performances, much of it choreographed by Denise Clarke. It was an honor to work with Denise and I am grateful to the Department of Drama for funding her involvement in Mariage Blanc.

## Process

Work with Denise was very brief with both myself and the actors. Two weeks after she had been given an annotated script referring to the placement and meaning of specific choreographies we met for approximately one hour before her work with the cast on the evenings of February 26 and 27.

She assessed the mood and style required for each choreography by first viewing the scenes or entire tableaux in which these would be featured. Despite the fact that we had not discussed any portion of her work at great length she approached her work with confidence and focus in an additive trial and error fashion. Typically, the appropriate music was played, she set a rough choreography with the actors and refined it with the incorporation of the music once the actors had a firm grasp of what they were required to do. The cast responded with enthusiasm and great concentration.

I was highly impressed by the amount and quality of work Denise packed into six hours of rehearsal time and even more so with the speed at which she understood what each piece of choreography was meant to express.

Because she was out of town Denise was unable to monitor the cast's progress and the responsibility was shared by the actors and myself. Denise did, however, leave us with a number of key concepts which I regularly referred to: unison, distillation, repetition and perhaps most

important for the refinement process, clarity of movement.

### Concept

I am often assaulted by colors, images and sounds when I read a play. As a director I cannot take these lightly and must allow them to become fully formed. In the case of Mariage Blanc many powerful images were summoned and many of these included physical movement or choreography. The decision to include movement as an integral part of this production was reached partially in response to Rozewicz's more or less explicit stage directions and partially in response to the images the script created in my mind.

The stage directions to Tableau 9 state:

Now Bianca, or some other actress, runs onto the stage dressed as a torreador holding a rapier and, instead of a red flag, a white marriage veil. The corrida begins. (55)

In this scene Rozewicz makes it clear that the dramatic action must be forwarded through physical activity. Absence of dialogue furthers this notion, placing the onus of the scene on its visual aspect. In the case of Tableau 12 movement is implied though not as explicitly. As we have seen, the stage directions in this case describe a scene that is 'realistic'... but not real ", devoid of dialogue, in which actors "speak with the voices of domestic and wild animals, smack their lips, belch, murmur, bellow and raise

toasts" (66).

The 'blood dance', already elaborated on in the set design section of this chapter, as well as the opening to "Glass and China" were two choreographies which were more a product of my interpretation of the script than of a suggestion on Rozewicz's part. The aim of the second choreography was to introduce Bianca's parents as conservative middle-aged citizens to whom tea drinking had become a convention which took on ritualistic characteristics and proportions. Tea drinking was meant to embody conventionality, not without ridiculing it. "Tea for Two" was chosen for its recognizability and accessibility to an audience which was assumed more familiar with British tea drinking than Polish tea drinking.

In much the same way, the opening to "The Happy Pair" was meant to ridicule the conventional and ritualistic aspects of marriage. Again, no attempt was made to find a period Polish wedding piece and "The Wedding March" was chosen for its accessibility. Another of this choreography's aims was to expose the more insidious nature of Bianca's entourage to whom the young couple's loss of virginity was to be the exciting finale. The animal sounds worked with Denise's choreography of simulated masturbation to produce a grotesque image to which was added the element of voyeurism as the characters took their places under the 'sheet'.

### Lighting design

I credit Jim Andrews with having opened my eyes to stage lighting. Indeed, I had never acknowledged the importance of a good lighting design until I saw Jim's work on The Castle three years ago. I knew then that I wanted him to design the lighting for my thesis production and fortunately this came to pass.

### Process

As production manager Jim had been involved in the production process for months before he became active as lighting designer. He had also been present at two run-throughs before Lesley and I met him about lighting in the third week of February. We could therefore skip over the introductory part of the process and immediately begin to discuss lighting itself and the effect we expected from it. We exposed our tableau by tableau approach and discussed some of the scenes in which we knew lighting would be crucial with particular emphasis on difficulties. Jim explained his preference for real source lighting and to this end requested a breakdown of reality in the script: which scenes were real, which were dream sequences and which are an expression of Bianca's inner emotions.

A few days later I gave Jim a copy of my sound,

lighting and slide list and he felt it to be quite comprehensive. We did not discuss lighting again until cue setting which led into technical rehearsals, during which cues were added and existing ones refined to opening night.

### Concept

Assuming that audiences at University of Calgary productions are more familiar with movie conventions than with theatre conventions led to the lighting concept. In cinema, the perception of reality is most often altered by sound and camera work and less frequently by lighting techniques, apart from standard dimming and shadows. Because cinematography is eliminated in theatrical production and live actors are limited to minor alterations of movement and vocal qualities, sound and lighting became the main elements through which the audience could assess whether particular scenes in the play were real, dream sequences or Bianca's inner emotions.

As such, it became imperative to use lighting sources grounded in reality, such as lamps and windows, as well as arbitrary sources such as an instrument placed behind the screen, or perfectly rounded spotlights coming down from the grid. Each light cue therefore had to be assessed not only by its placement on an emotional scale but also on a reality scale, ranging from reality to pure fantasy.

**CHAPTER V:**  
**THE REHEARSAL PROCESS**

This chapter will report and comment on the rehearsal process from the first reading on February 11th to the preview on March 26th. Although many design and technical aspects were concurrent with rehearsals, these will be touched upon only briefly as chapter 4 has been set out to explore these in greater detail. Focus then will be placed on work with the cast as it struggled with the text and its physical applications toward the staged production.

As Hugh Morrison suggests: "The personal relationship between actors and director is probably the most important single factor in useful direction..." (157). Thus, although it seems advisable to not dwell on personalities when describing process with actors, it is often unavoidable as actors are first human beings with distinct characteristics.

Rehearsals were scheduled six days a week at three to five hours per session. Despite the fact that Saturdays were invariably dark, a rehearsal week will begin on Monday and end on Sunday.

February 11 to 17

Since the casting had been completed two months before the beginning of rehearsals (with one exception), the atmosphere on the first evening was bubbling with anticipation and energy. We began with a brief personal introduction by the participants, including not only the



cast and myself, but Ted Bruneau, our stage manager and his assistants, Trevor Reuger (properties) and Jackson Hui (costumes), as well as Lesley, whom I had invited to present the set and costume design concept. As we gathered around Lesley and her model, all were attentive. The penis trees elicited many jokes of a sexual nature, but I found it difficult to gauge the cast's feelings about the set. My impression, quite possibly unfounded, was that they were, for the most part, somewhat taken aback. Reaction to the costume sketches was more personalized, as each actor focused primarily on his or her character.

Before proceeding with the first reading, I asked the cast not to 'put too much into it', by which I meant that they should not adopt an attitude to what they were reading, but should let the script express itself. I warned them against being misled by the auditions, in which I had deliberately asked them to exaggerate for comedic effect, and explained that although some scenes might get to that point by opening night, our process would begin with inner truth. We read without stopping but for pronunciation notes; however, we ran out of time before I could answer any questions the cast may have had.

Although I felt it was important to limit rehearsals to the pre-determined length, this was a source of some frustration throughout the rehearsal period.

I began the next rehearsal by asking the cast to point

out what they thought were the themes of the play. I found this useful on several counts, first, to assess which themes were more easily accessible, secondly, to assess individual responses to the script, and thirdly, to discern the areas which would need more attention. Themes mentioned were bondage, repression/suppression, unclean women, ambiguity, love, sex, penis envy, discovery of our identity, lost youth, madness/senility. They had not mentioned the theme that was most important to me and with some prompting one of them said "the lies of society", which was quite close and to which I added hypocrisy and obsolete customs and traditions (by obsolete, I mean no longer useful as opposed to no longer in use).

We had a stop and start reading where I interjected explanations and the cast asked questions, which I answered to the best of my ability or deferred to a future rehearsal when more time and depth was needed.

Two readings were not sufficient for an in-depth analysis, but as I felt restlessness among the younger actors, I decided to proceed to the next step.

Because of this play's episodic structure, the large number of characters and even greater number of entrances and exits, I decided on a formally structured rehearsal process as described by such directors as Clurman and Benedetti. These suggest that after the preliminary analysis period, which in this case was admittedly short,

rehearsals should focus on blocking or movement of actors on the set.

I warned the cast that the next three rehearsals would not likely require their creative input and I asked them to withhold commentary, even on the most awkward moves, all the while reassuring them that the ensuing blocking would be very rough, but would be adjusted in the course of later rehearsals.

Having previously blocked the entire play on paper (except the choreography), I proceeded to communicate this information to the cast in three evenings of tight scheduling. With the intention of not wasting anyone's time, rehearsals whenever possible, were scheduled not in blocks of successive scenes, but rather in blocks of scenes in which the same characters appeared. To my amazement, with the concerted effort of the cast, as well as an efficient stage management team, by Friday, 10:00 p.m., we had blocked the entire play. Having never proceeded in this fashion, I was further amazed to discover that student actors preferred being blocked, rather than arriving at blocking through a cooperative process.

On Sunday, as we would do for the first four weeks of rehearsal, we had a run-through which reviewed what we had worked on during the week. I found weekly run-throughs to be greatly beneficial to both myself and the cast. Because each tableau had its own relationship to reality and

required different approaches to blocking and acting, I felt that the cast would benefit from keeping as tight as possible a perspective on the entire production. As for myself, run-throughs pointed to problem areas on a weekly basis, never allowing a great imbalance between different sections. Specifically, this run-through enabled me to assess: blocking on a spatial and visual level, the efficacy of patterns in communicating character, character relationships, dramatic action and mood, as well as problems of a physical/mechanical order.

By the end of this first week, I felt very positive about the cast and had allayed all doubts with regard to casting. This week had also allowed me to get to know the actors on an individual basis and form some opinions on the most efficient way to direct each of them. Although the relationship between participants in theatre is somewhat elusive, I find it to have considerable impact on the final production and believe in giving it due consideration.

February 18 to 24

The second week of rehearsals concentrated on fine tuning the blocking and making it meaningful to the actors by adding a basic layer of interpretation to each tableau. To this end, each tableau was rehearsed separately, in a stop and start fashion, interlaced with discussion on interpretation of lines and the relationship of each tableau

to the whole.

A portion of each rehearsal, during this week, was also set aside to develop trust, camaraderie and team spirit. While I believe this to be important to any production, the sexual nature of this play and the nudity of the final scene prompted me to afford it rehearsal time and not leave it to chance. Spirited games and improvisations found in Spolin and Benedetti, on the one hand, and of my own device, on the other, were played to relax the actors and enable them to consider themselves equal to each other, as well as produce an atmosphere of security in which to try anything without fear. In the case of Jane (Bianca) and Kathy (Pauline) the exercises attempted to free inhibitions about physical intimacy artificially for quicker results. During these games and exercises, actors were partnered with as many other actors as possible, so as not to limit camaraderie to actors whose characters were more often in contact.

The aims of certain activities were two-fold. These were devised for the development of actor relationships, but also for character and character relationship development. These exercises aimed at determining given circumstances on which actors could base choices, vis-a-vis each character's social, cultural, historical and personal psychology and past (Felner 202). This in turn helped the actors with physical characterization exercises based on animal imagery (the animal each actor arrived at, in these exercises, was

used in tableau 12 and others).

The Sunday run-through, attended by Lesley, Jim and John, proved that the production was on track and the actors were ready to enter the next phase of rehearsals. For the first time, Jane and Jarvis (Benjamin) stripped to their underwear, a process which I did not want to interfere with unless necessary. These actors, as well as the rest of the cast seemed quite at ease and unself-conscious about the situation. (One of the actors did however, confront me a few days later with what he called my "cheap blocking", which made a woman strip on top of a table. I was taken aback and rather upset that I should be seen as exploitative, but defended myself and struggled with my conscience for the next few days. In the end I decided that once the white drop covered the stage, the table would no longer appear to be one and we kept the original blocking.)

February 25 to March 3

The third week was devoted to both choreography and continuity. Denise Clarke attended rehearsals on Tuesday and Wednesday, as described in Chapter 4, while on Monday we worked tableaux 1 - 4, on Thursday, 5 - 8, and on Friday, 9 - 13. Every rehearsal after Wednesday allowed a certain amount of time for fine-tuning and revision of the choreography, until the cast was comfortable with this

element.

The focus in working the scenes in sequence was placed on the transitions from tableau to tableau and the adjustments the actors would be required to make, often in very short periods of time, with respect to mood, genre and acting style. In his list of factors influencing the choices of an actor Benedetti includes "the style or genre of the play". Aiming actors, he adds: "it is your job to synthesize your concerns as a performer (to be seen, heard, stylistically appropriate, etc.) until they become an organic part of your character's world and of the character itself" (234). This being said, in an academic situation in which actors are also students it is the director's job to facilitate the actors in this quest.

It became obvious that actors were having difficulties with certain sections because I had not clarified, even for myself, the positions of these tableaux and scenes with respect to reality.

While viewing the Sunday run-through that week, tone and acting style became my primary focus as the cast was quite comfortable with interpretation.

March 4 to 10

Monday, Tuesday and Sunday (our weekly run was postponed to the following Monday to free the Primary for light hanging on Sunday) were devoted to specific, intimate

work. On Monday only Kathy and Jane were called and work was limited to Tableaux 1,5,8 and 10. Realism being the basic acting style for all of these tableaux, with the exception of the 'blood dance' and ripping scene, I felt that work was needed towards the progression (not positive) of Bianca and Pauline's relationship from tableau to tableau. We also worked on mapping out a climactic curve for each tableau which tightened these considerably.

Tuesday was tightly scheduled to work with Mother (Jennifer), Cook (Shannon), Grandfather (Trevor) and Benjamin (Jarvis).

Mother was certainly one of the most difficult to play because it required playing a comedic character in Tableaux 2 and 6, a dramatic character in Tableau 3 and 'hyper-realism' in Tableau 9. Fortunately Jennifer is flexible and experienced and we accomplished much in the way of contrasting these styles in very little time. Shannon looked on while we worked Mother in "The Confessional" and adjusted her characterization of Cook immediately. For the first time, the power of this scene was brought out: the contrasting yet complimentary despair of Mother to Cook's list of culinary questions.

Trevor, dedicated and working tirelessly, was nonetheless having great difficulty with Grandfather. First, he could not lose the British accent he had unconsciously begun to use during the first reading. In



fact, this accent was a response to the rhythm of the dialogue which, after all, had been translated by Czerniawski who had been living in England for several years. Secondly, he either played a wonderfully funny dirty old man or he played the script; it was very difficult for him to merge the two. We did not solve all problems that night but before opening night Trevor had assimilated all the parts of Grandfather into a very solid performance.

Work with Jarvis consisted mostly of contrasting more clearly a comfortable Benjamin reciting poetry and a self-conscious awkward Benjamin trying to fit into Bianca's family and society. Jarvis also wanted to clarify some of the poetry and its place within the script.

Most of Sunday's rehearsal was devoted to Jane. On the agenda was Bianca's monologue about St. Nicholas (Tableau 5), difficult because of its length, repetition, detail, and the fact that I could not decide whether the delivery should contrast the ugliness in the text or sustain it. In the end, no firm choice was ever made and the scene never quite came to life. Jane was also having some difficulty with the acting style of Tableau 9, in which Bianca is dreaming and Tableau 12 (before she realizes Benjamin has undressed, 67) which we've already seen is "'realistic' ... but not real" (66). In both sections I felt Jane's body, face and throat should be relaxed to alter Bianca's staccato rhythm to a fluid, melodious one.

During this rehearsal we also worked on Tableau 6. This tableau had been difficult from the start since the fast pace necessary for the dialogue did not correspond to the playwright's stage directions: "Mother and Aunt are sifting through the linen: they count it, sort it out, arrange it, unfold it and fold it" (34). The action, if carried out, slowed the pace to such an extent as to render what is virtually a series of lists, unrecognizable. We struggled with this tableau until the following week when it became obvious that it would never be effective according to plan. I then reblocked the scene and shuffled the lines between Aunt and Mother to create the effect I felt the tableau required. The actors readily accepted the changes.

Wednesday, Thursday and Friday were spent setting scene changes and running scenes in sequence.

March 11 to 17

The fifth week of rehearsals was the cast's last opportunity to work without technical additions. The Monday run-through proved that the most pressing problem was the slow pace of the show. To tighten the pace where lacking, it was necessary to remind actors of basic techniques such as glibbing (beginning a line over the last word of another actor's line), listening to fellow actors, stamina and concentration. However, perhaps the biggest impediment to rapidity was several actors' habit of thinking between lines

rather than during lines. Furthermore, show furniture gradually replacing rehearsal furniture, scene changes needed constant adjustments which also impeded pace.

Tuesday was exciting for us all since it was the first opportunity to use the large, white drop. Although we had frequently discussed it and actors had seen the model, I knew that the cast had never fully understood how large the drop really was or what they would be asked to do with it.

After five weeks of rehearsal I felt enthusiasm was waning due to fatigue and bribed the cast with Friday night off if Thursday's 'Italian run' proved that we could spare one night. All were delighted and worked extremely well to keep the 'Italian' down to one hour and eight minutes. They cheered as I announced that they were not required until Sunday evening, as much for the night off as for the knowledge that they had deserved the reward. In fact, I would have given them the break no matter what the results had been, but announcing it as a reward allowed them to feel proud and elevated team spirit.

Upon departure Thursday evening I asked the cast to make sure the break was beneficial to themselves and the production and the Sunday run-through proved that they had taken this very seriously. Although an error made the timing inaccurate that night, I felt that the production had benefited from the 'Italian' as well as the time off.

Sunday marked the first of several long days for many

of us as sound and light cues were set from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., after which rehearsal ran from 6:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. Although I felt quite confident about the production, the integration of technical elements created two disparate emotions: excitement and sadness. Excitement at physically seeing and hearing what my mind had imagined over and over, and sadness at the loss of intimacy with the cast and the knowledge that my focus now had to be split among several elements, of which the cast was only one.

March 18 to March 27

The process during the technical phase (weekly analysis no longer being applicable, this section begins with the first technical run-through and ends with the March 26 preview) and after Tuesday's cue to cue, typically began with a non-stop run-through with lighting, sound, scenic effects and slides, proceeded to actor notes and ended with technical notes which were attended to by the following night's rehearsal.

Aside from problems which could only be eliminated with time and practice, such as releasing the drop and maneuvering the mirror, technical discussions mostly dealt with the sequence of cues in particular scenes. Particularly problematic sequences were those of Tableau 4 and the entrance into Tableau 7.

Tableau 4 included three different sequences

corresponding respectively to Bianca's perception of: 1) "a huge member like that of a horse" (26), 2) "a white member resembling a stinkhorn" (27), 3) "a huge member like a stick ... trying to pierce her" (28). Because what Bianca saw was not seen by the audience, it was necessary, through trial and error, to find the sequence which would best express her fear and point to its source. Unfortunately, the slides Lesley had gotten made from carefully selected pictures were not ready until preview and we realized only then that they were unclear and could not be made out. Consequently, this tableau never quite made the impact we had hoped for.

The scene change from Tableau 6 to Tableau 7 was much simpler conceptually and the difficulty lay in creating a smooth sequence upholding the qualities suggested by Rozewicz: "operatic" and "fairy-tale" (40). The helium-filled trees being hard to maneuver, the sequence was somewhat inconsistent but effective.

Perhaps the most disappointing scenic element was the mirror, which we would never use as planned. Lesley and I wanted the mirror to come down over the actors on the beds at the end of Tableau 8 and rise again to discover the actors on the beds at the top of Tableau 10. In doing this the mirror then doubled as a transparent curtain. Unfortunately, Don felt that this was too dangerous and the stage had to be cleared while the mirror was brought up and down, breaking the flow of the tableaux. Thus, the amount

of time the mirror was in the lowered position was cut short and I felt its importance as a tool of perception was trivialized.

During the Friday rehearsal Jane was given a wig to cut for the first time. Although we had often discussed the fact that Bianca was very deliberate in removing her clothes and cutting her hair, Jane found this very difficult and would, perhaps unconsciously, gradually pick up the pace until her actions became almost frantic. On this evening, she cut her hand with the scissors. The cut was not serious but we nonetheless arranged to work out the hair cutting with Ron Sigmund, our wig designer. Using old wigs, Jane arrived at a slow and deliberate pattern which would reduce the risk of injury. Although the action was now choreographed, it remained spontaneous looking and Jane was never hurt again.

Approximately sixty people attended the preview which ran quite smoothly. This offered the actors the opportunity to gauge the audience's reaction and adjust their timing accordingly. I gave the cast a few notes but knew that my work was over and felt confident that the production was competent and close to what I had envisioned.

I attended most of the subsequent performances but aside from adjusting the timing of certain cues I did not feel the need or desire to interfere in any way. Under Don's guidance, Ted had competently taken over and I remain

eternally grateful to them both.

**Conclusion:**

PRODUCTION RETROSPECTIVE



Thank God our art doesn't last. At least we're not adding more junk to museums. Yesterday's performance is by now a failure. If we accept this we can always start again from scratch. (Brook 56)

Perhaps the aspect of directing which I find most fascinating is that every production brings with it a new beginning. Each play demands to be studied with a fresh eye devoid of preconceived notions of what drama should be, of what theatre should be. Paradoxically, this fresh eye cannot see through emptiness; it cannot see but through experience, topical concerns, personal passions and tastes as well as an accumulated wealth of knowledge. Try as we may, we cannot see through an eye which is not our own, at a moment prior to or after the moment we are seeing.

I can therefore assert in all confidence that the production of Mariage Blanc which opened March 27 was the product of the greatest commitment, effort and vision I could invest at that time. I can also look back with today's eye, a few months later, and discuss what I now consider its flaws just as I will undoubtedly do in the months to come, probably arriving at different conclusions. There is no absolute solution to a theatre production; there are several solutions. The following, therefore, is not an exhaustive list of problems, it is a list of the major problems as I now perceive them. I will, for brevity's

sake, dwell on flaws and it should be understood that that which is not discussed I deem to have been successful to a lesser or greater degree or have already discussed in previous chapters.

I believe the greatest flaw in this production was the unequal treatment of male and female characters. In a play which sets out to denounce this fact of real life, the error is inexcusable. While the Maid and Milkmaid's costumes were meant to represent women in the eyes of the male characters, the reverse could also have been applied. Bull-Father could have justifiably been given an enlarged, fake phallus since it is clear that he is viewed by most female characters as a sexual object, though with disgust rather than desire. Although the maids' costumes were meant to mock men and not women, only the female body was reified.

This is also true of Tableaux 12 and 13. Although I felt Bianca's nudity imperative in exposing the character's vulnerability and radical alteration, I was unable to portray Benjamin's vulnerability in the same manner. I justified the decision not to strip Benjamin of his underwear on the basis of his last poem which begins: "Give me women, wine and snuff/ Until I cry out 'hold, enough!'" (67). I believed that it was necessary for Benjamin to have an erection during this poem and since this could not be counted on I opted out of full nudity.

In both counts I am unforgiving towards my lack of

vision which did not allow me to break out of the existing "dominant cultural ideology" (Dolan 41) represented by the "white, middle-class, heterosexual, ... male" (Dolan 1). Forever critical of the fact that men's bodies are rarely exposed in film or theatre I went the same route, unable to understand that my conservatism was the result of a "dominant cultural ideology [which] appears in representation as naturalized and seemingly nonideological" (Dolan 41).

A general flaw in the production was inconsistency in the execution of ideas which I felt to be conceptually sound. These include use of the white drop and the slides in Tableau 4.

Budgetary restraints notwithstanding, I feel that I should have pushed for a more satisfactory method of releasing the drop which would have guaranteed, or at least raised the odds of a perfect execution. As it was, the release of the drop was executed without hitches in less than half of the performances, seriously dampening the effect on the other evenings.

However, the effect Lesley and I wished to create with the slides may have been impossible. Although we discussed the slides in terms of subliminality, we also wanted the images to be distinguishable; these two terms may be mutually exclusive. On the other hand, the fact that we

could not distinguish the images may have been due to poor quality in the slides. Despite this problem, I do not feel the effect was completely lost and I remain satisfied, though perhaps less than I could have been, with the result.

Two of the productions problems I feel stem from the conception rather than the execution. These are the titles of the tableaux and the movable mirror. In both cases I feel our concept was sound but in need of refining.

Having previously expressed the reasoning behind the titling of the tableaux using a variety of methods corresponding to each tableau, I now feel this to have been a fundamental error. I believe a consistent method of announcing each tableau would have been more effective for two reasons: it would have enhanced the differences between tableaux and not hampered them as I originally thought, and it would have provided the audience with a few seconds of respite between scenes as they recognized the familiar sign. Consistent slides or title cards (used in the Wajda production; Gussow 5) would now be the preferred method. I would also list the thirteen tableaux in the program, a suggestion which Jim made, unfortunately after the programs had been printed.

The hanging mirror was a scenic element which Lesley and I both felt was essential. However, in using it we did not find a way of incorporating it in the broader concept by

which the world of the play becomes more and more cluttered. The mirror was then the only significant object which did not remain onstage after it was brought on. (Some smaller objects had to be removed before the drop was removed to prevent undue damage.) We perceived and understood the inconsistency from the start but unfortunately dismissed it rather than trying to find a way of making it work or discarding the mirror altogether. I remain perplexed that we did so and unable to justify our action. Furthermore, I have not yet been able to arrive at a satisfactory solution.

This being said, I remain pleased with the production and consider it successful and faithful to what I believed to be Rozewicz's intent. Moreover, on a personal level Mariage Blanc has been the most enjoyable and positive experience I have had as a director. The stress of a thesis production being what it is, I am eternally grateful to all participants for their support and the joy with which they imbued their work.

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