STRAVINSKY'S GAMES OF CHANCE: THE USE OF CARD GAMES TO NAVIGATE BETWEEN TWO WORLDS IN HISTOIRE DU SOLDAT (1917-18), THE RAKE'S PROGRESS (1951), AND JEU DE CARTES (1937)

A Thesis in
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by

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Abstract

This thesis examines how Igor Stravinsky and his collaborators used card games to represent two different and distinct worlds in three of their pieces: *Histoire du soldat*, *The Rake's Progress*, and *Jeu de Cartes*. Stravinsky worked with librettist Charles Ferdinand Ramuz on *Histoire*, librettists W. H. Auden and Chester Kallman on *Rake*, and writer Nikita Malayev on the scenario for *Jeu*. Throughout the course of writing these works, these musicians and writers chose to represent the real world of the main characters and the evil world of the devil in many different ways. One feature that is present in all three works included in this thesis is the musical and literary representation of a card game. The fate of the main character is decided by the outcome of the game. Each of these pieces is discussed in turn, with musical examples.
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Chapter 1

Introduction

In a word, sir, if the Devil were to teach our children how to wear out or stupefy natural conscience, and keep off all sense of God, Religion, and Futurity, and how they might arrive to Impudence in sinning, I think, he could not well take a more effectual step towards it, than by encouraging them in those sports that treat the name or Providence of God irreverently...¹

These words were written by an anonymous Boston gentleman in 1755 and reflect his concern over the behavior of the children of the recipient of the letter, namely their unsavory habit of playing cards. The letter-writer asserts that card-playing is a gateway for such sins as swearing, drinking and fighting. Playing card games even causes the player to take the name of the Lord in vain, insofar as to ask God for help in such trivial matters as winning a hand of cards is quite profane. It is no wonder that when Igor Stravinsky and his collaborators set out to create a sense of evil in Histoire du soldat (1917-1918), Jeu de cartes (1935-1936), and The Rake's Progress (1947-1951), they chose to include card games as pivotal parts of the action. Two of the three works, Rake and Histoire, incorporate scenes involving interplay between the protagonist and the devil character in which the fate of the protagonist is decided by the outcome of the game. The plot of the third piece, Jeu, is made up entirely of a game of poker, with each act portraying a "deal" in the game. In order to understand the literary and musical connotations of the card games in each of these works, some background information is required.

Histoire du soldat was written in 1917-1918 and features music by Igor

¹ A Letter to a Gentleman on the Sin and Danger of Playing at Cards and Other Games (Boston: Fowle, [1755]), 7.
Stravinsky and a libretto in the French language by Charles Ferdinand Ramuz. It is difficult to classify *Histoire* in terms of genre as the work is brief and includes elements of instrumental and vocal music, drama, and dance. It is scored for a septet of instruments including violin, double bass, clarinet, bassoon, cornet, trombone, and percussion. The action takes place among four main characters – the soldier, the devil, the narrator, and the princess. Stravinsky and Ramuz envisioned a small-scale work in order to combat a number of factors working against the success of a larger work. Though the two men ostensibly worked together on *Histoire*, the fact that the text and the music were rarely simultaneous within the work meant that the two elements of the work remained largely separate.

According to Maureen Carr,

> Because the text is narrated rather than set to music, composer and author both retain their artistic autonomy. The musical results would have been much different had Stravinsky underlaid the entire text. By maintaining their artistic autonomy, each of the artists was free to experiment.²

This experimentation is evident even in the genesis of the work. The outbreak of World War I had stripped Stravinsky of his financial backing and made large-scale performances all but impossible in many European venues. The composer negotiated support from noted arts patron Werner Reinhart in 1918, which made completion of *Histoire* possible.³ The two collaborators envisioned a work with only a few speaking parts and limited instrumentation so that it could be

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performed in small rooms and travel easily. Though a widespread flu epidemic in 1917-1918 limited the number of stops on the original tour to only one in Geneva, Stravinsky and Ramuz were able to realize their vision.4

Stravinsky and Ramuz altered the story several times during the writing of Histoire. Alain Rochat describes the writing process as having three “campaigns” and encompassing five separate final drafts.5 The scenario actually changed significantly from the first draft to the fifth, with the main alteration affecting the character of the king. In Ramuz’s initial vision, the character of the king provided the comic relief in Histoire. The king spoke frequently in the work and became a kind of “buffo” character with his mindless chatter and simple actions. By the last draft, the character of the king was all but eliminated from work and does not speak at all. Another change occurs in the part of the princess. Emmeline, as she is known in the first draft, is transformed from a mute character who still has the use of all other physical faculties into (in the final draft) a lifeless form on a bed who stirs only when the soldier rouses her with the “Tango” and dances with her. The alteration of these two characters allows the scenario to focus entirely on the interplay between the devil and the soldier.6

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The Faustian story of *Histoire* centers on the soldier, Joseph, who is on leave from his company and walking home to meet with his family and his sweetheart.

While resting near a stream, he pulls out his violin and begins to play, unaware that the devil, disguised as an old man with a butterfly net, is watching and listening.

Table 1.1 summarizes the scenario and music in *Histoire du soldat*. The table is arranged so that when the music and scenario are separate in the actual work, they have independent rows in the table. Likewise, when the scenario and music overlap in the work, they share a row in the table.

Table 1.1: *Synopsis of Histoire du soldat*[^1]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario</th>
<th>Music</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Soldier sits by stream, plays violin</td>
<td>The Soldier’s March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devil appears, disguised as old man</td>
<td>Airs By A Stream</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devil offers soldier book for violin, takes soldier to his home</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soldier comes home, is not recognized</td>
<td>The Soldier’s March - Reprise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soldier confronts devil, who reminds him of book</td>
<td>Pastorale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soldier makes living as merchant</td>
<td>Airs By A Stream - Reprise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soldier becomes disenchanted, devil appears as old woman, reintroduces violin, soldier tries to play but cannot</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soldier rips book to pieces, throws violin away, runs away</td>
<td>Airs By A Stream - Reprise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soldier enters inn, hears of ill princess from man (devil?), decides to try to heal her</td>
<td>The Soldier’s March - Reprise</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[^1]: Igor Stravinsky, *Histoire du soldat*, libretto by Charles Ferdinand Ramuz, English version by Michael Flanders and Kitty Black (London: J. & W. Chester, 1987). This table, as well as the others in this chapter, are my own interpretation of the scenarios and music of these works based on the scores I have referenced.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Music</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Devil enters dressed as virtuoso violinist</td>
<td>Royal March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soldier challenges devil to card game,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>devil wins and soldier gets him drunk,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>devil becomes still, soldier takes violin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soldier enters castle, plays for princess</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Princess dances</td>
<td>Tango</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ragtime</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devil enters, tries to take violin</td>
<td>The Devil’s Dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little Chorale</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devil reenters, sings, disappears</td>
<td>The Devil’s Song</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Chorale</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrator speaks final actions of characters, soldier tries to go</td>
<td>Triumphal March of the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>back to former life, devil appears and plays violin</td>
<td>Devil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In *Histoire*, Stravinsky and his collaborators do not focus on a card game as the way to decide the soldier’s fate. In fact, it is neither the soldier nor the devil who actually suggest playing the game. The narrator suggests the card game to the soldier as a way to give back the money that he accumulated using the devil’s book. In this way, the soldier can repay the “debt” that he owes to the devil. This card game does not truly affect the outcome of the work since the soldier wins the game but the devil triumphs in the end. The card game links *Histoire du soldat* with *The Rake’s Progress* and *Jeu de Cartes*, but the way Stravinsky and his collaborators choose to include the game and set it to music is truly unique.

Stravinsky began writing his neoclassical English-language opera, *The Rake’s Progress*, in 1947 in collaboration with poet W.H. Auden, whom the composer met earlier that year after asking his neighbor, Aldous Huxley, for help finding a
librettist. Chester Kallman, Auden's frequent partner, joined the endeavor in 1948.8

*Rake* was conceived by the composer after he viewed a series of eponymous engravings by the English painter William Hogarth in 1947 in Chicago. Hogarth's engravings depict the life of Tom Rakewell, a lazy young man who impregnates and then leaves his fiancée, Sarah Young, and finds himself the heir to a fortune that he consequently squanders, ending up an inmate of Bedlam, a notorious asylum.9

Stravinsky, Auden, and Kallman's version of the scenario is similar in many respects, but vastly different in others. Tom Rakewell's love interest in the opera is named Anne Trulove, and she is not pregnant. The opera also introduces the character of Nick Shadow, the mysterious manservant who offers to accompany Tom to London to claim his inheritance, only to reveal himself as the devil in the end and sentence Tom to insanity. The opera was premiered in Venice in 1951.

The card game in *The Rake's Progress* plays a much more integral part in the fate of Tom Rakewell than that of *Histoire* and the soldier. Nick Shadow forces Tom to correctly guess the three cards he draws from the deck, and if Tom guesses incorrectly, he must remit payment for Shadow's services by killing himself, thus condemning himself to hell. Although, with Anne Trulove's help, Tom makes three correct guesses, he is doomed to a life of insanity, believing himself to be Adonis

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until, after Anne's final visit, he dies. Table 1.2 outlines the scenario and important music in *The Rake's Progress*. 
Table 1.2: Synopsis of *The Rake's Progress*\(^\text{10}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario</th>
<th>Significant Music</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Act I, Scene 1: Anne Trulove and Tom Rakewell are in love,</td>
<td>&quot;The Woods Are Green&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father Trulove is uneasy</td>
<td>&quot;Here I Stand&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nick Shadow appears and tells Tom of inheritance</td>
<td>&quot;I Wished But Once&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom and Nick leave for London</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act I, Scene 2: Tom meets Mother Goose</td>
<td>Whores and Roaring Boys Chorus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act I, Scene 3: Anne leaves for London</td>
<td>&quot;No Word From Tom&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act II, Scene 1: Nick suggests that Tom marry Baba the Turk, Tom agrees</td>
<td>&quot;In Youth&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;My Tale Shall Be Told&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act II, Scene 2: Anne discovers Tom's marriage</td>
<td>&quot;O Heart&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act II, Scene 3: Tom is bored of Baba, covers her with wig</td>
<td>Baba's &quot;Breathless Chatter&quot; aria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pantomime</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom agrees to market bread machine</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act III, Scene 1: Auction</td>
<td>Sellems recitative and aria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baba tells Anne to pursue Tom</td>
<td>Bidding Scenes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act III, Scene 2: Nick wants payment, gives Tom choice of suicides</td>
<td>&quot;How Dark&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Card Game</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom wins game but Nick renders him insane</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act III, Scene 3: Tom is in Bedlam</td>
<td>&quot;Madmen Chorus&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne visits Tom, who only answers to &quot;Adonis&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;In a Foolish Dream&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom dies</td>
<td>&quot;Lullaby&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epilogue</td>
<td>Chorus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The scenario of The Rake’s Progress represents a progression in the importance of the card game as a vehicle to the end fate of the main characters of Histoire and Rake. One more Stravinsky work utilizes a card game, although in a much different way. In the next work, the card game moves from a point of decision for the main character into the entire scenario of the piece.

Stravinsky’s love of card games provoked in him an interest in writing a work devoted entirely to that pastime. Jeu de Cartes was written in 1935-36 and represents a departure from the card games in the previous two works discussed in this paper. Stravinsky and his collaborators, George Balanchine and Nikita Malayev, included an “argument” in the score of the piece, which describes the scenario as the collaborators envisioned it.\textsuperscript{11} The scenario of Jeu de Cartes centers on the character of the Joker, who believes himself to be better than the other cards in the deck because he has the ability to take on the identity of any card. The ballet is written in three “deals” rather than acts, with each deal ending in a different outcome. Though the Joker does not have success in every deal, he remains convinced that he is the most powerful card in the deck until his fall from grace in the third deal, culminating in his suicide at the feet of the King and Queen of Hearts.

The scenarios of Histoire du soldat and The Rake’s Progress include not only a card game, but also a character representing the devil. I believe that Jeu de Cartes also includes a devil character, although it may not be quite as obvious. The conceited and conniving Joker tries to manipulate the other characters in the same way that the devil in Histoire and Nick Shadow in Rake manipulate the soldier and

\textsuperscript{11} Igor Stravinsky, Jeu de cartes, with a foreword by Herbert Schneider, trans. Richard Deveson (London: Ernst Eulenburg Ltd, 1986), VIII.
Tom Rakewell. The Joker’s antics are reflected musically with Stravinsky’s choices of instrumentation, harmonic structure, and melodic contour during the moments of the scenario in which the Joker plays a prevalent part.

Since *Jeu de Cartes* is arranged in three deals, there exists the unique possibility to analyze each deal separately before looking at the piece as a whole. The Joker certainly has some success in the second deal, but his fallibility in the first and third deals show a different look at the devil character than Stravinsky and his collaborators have shown in *Histoire* and *Rake*. Unlike the previous two works discussed earlier, we have definite proof that good triumphs over evil in the Joker’s final suicide scene. Table 1.3 outlines the scenario and basic musical sections of *Jeu de Cartes*.

Table 1.3: Synopsis of *Jeu de Cartes*¹²

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deal</th>
<th>Scenario</th>
<th>Musical Sections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Deal</td>
<td>Three hands are dealt</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>One hand drops out, other two hands have equal straights, although one of these contains the Joker</td>
<td><em>Pas d’action</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Joker rages that he is unable to win the deal</td>
<td>Dance of the Joker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other cards ignore him and dance calmly</td>
<td>Little Waltz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Deal</td>
<td>Three hands are dealt</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The hand with three Kings is defeated by the hand with four Queens</td>
<td><em>March</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The third hand</td>
<td><em>Variations of the Four Queens</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Variation of the Jack of Hearts</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Coda</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Composed of four Aces and the Joker, defeating the hand with four Queens
| The Joker pursues the Queens, who cannot escape him
| Reprise of March and *Danse d'ensemble*
| **Third Deal**
| Three hands are dealt
| Two hands are straight (Spades and Hearts), Spade straight contains Joker and beats Heart straight
| Third hand is Heart royal flush, beats Joker's hand
| Joker kills himself at the feet of the King and Queen of Hearts
| Introduction
| Waltz
| Presto (Battle between the Spades and Hearts)
| Final Dance (Triumph of the Hearts)

*Jeu de Cartes* was written after *Histoire du soldat* and before *The Rake's Progress*, but I have chosen to include it as the final chapter because it is so different from the other two works. While card games are used as plot devices in *Histoire* and *Rake*, the entire scenario of *Jeu* revolves around a game of poker. In the first two pieces, the devil characters initiate or participate in the card game in order to manipulate the other main characters. In *Jeu*, the devil character takes the form of one of the cards. It is also interesting to note the differences in the victors of the card games. Stravinsky and his collaborators do not always permit good to conquer evil, nor is the reverse true. In some cases, Stravinsky and his collaborators leave their audiences with only a hazy idea of whether good or evil triumphs, while in other works, the winner is quite obvious. Pursuing the answers to these questions
leads to intriguing music-theoretical analysis of the works in addition to the
consideration of instrumentation and literary choices in the dialogue and scenarios
of the works. It is my hope that my analyses of the musical narratives of *Histoire du
soldat, The Rake's Progress, and Jeu de Cartes* will influence others to investigate and
enjoy these works.
Chapter Two

The Two Worlds of *Histoire du soldat*

Stravinsky employs many theoretical techniques in order to create the two worlds of his story. Various melodic and rhythmic motives represent both main characters, with these motives combined at significant moments. Another layer of the "two worlds" argument comes from the staging and choreography of the piece. The devil and the soldier are each assigned a prop – the violin represents the soldier while the book represents the devil – with the two objects exchanged between the two main characters of the opera to demonstrate first the separation and eventually the coming-together of the worlds of the soldier and the devil.

Before we begin to examine the two worlds of *Histoire du soldat*, we must first understand the themes and motives associated with the devil and the soldier. Stravinsky employs several different theoretical techniques to represent the devil in *Histoire du soldat*. Oscillating two-note patterns occur at several different points in the story in which the devil makes an appearance.\(^{13}\) The first notable occurrence of the two-note motive takes place in the opening movement of the piece. The curtain rises on the character of the soldier walking by himself. The devil makes his entrance during the second piece of music, "Airs by a Stream." At first, he is only a casual observer but gradually moves closer and closer to the soldier until the soldier finally notices him. As the devil gets closer to the soldier, the motive of the two oscillating notes becomes more and more prevalent. To illustrate the progression of

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this motive, we must first look at m. 50 (Ex. 2.1). The clarinet part in this measure contains a run of sixteenth notes that move up and down in pitch and seem to suggest an oscillating pattern that will later become the more compact two-note pattern seen most often in the depiction of the devil.

Example 2.1. "Airs by a Stream," m. 50.

The running sixteenth-note preparatory gesture picks up again on the second count of measure 70 (Ex. 2.2), also in the clarinet part. This gesture coincides with the stage direction indicating that the devil hides himself in order to continue his observation of the soldier.

Example 2.2. "Airs by a Stream," mm. 70-72

As "Airs by a Stream" continues, we begin to hear the two-note pattern. Measure 76 illustrates the first genuine appearance of the focal two-note oscillation (Ex. 2.3). It occurs in the violin part and continues on and off for the rest of the movement.
Example 2.3. “Airs by a Stream,” mm. 76-77

One of the most interesting appearances of the oscillation pattern occurs in the “Pastorale” movement of Histoire. The action on the stage only includes the soldier, who by now has figured out that the devil tricked him into taking the book and stole several years of his life. The soldier laments his choice and mulls over what he has lost in the exchange. In m. 28 of this short movement, we hear a two-note oscillating pattern in the clarinet solo (Ex. 2.4). The pattern is very much like a trill and lasts such a short time that it can easily be missed, but its appearance at a time when the action is completely focused on the soldier serves to remind the audience that the devil is still present in the story and is, in fact, the reason for the soldier’s melancholy.

Example 2.4. “Pastorale,” m. 28

The oscillation becomes even more prevalent in the two subsequent reprises of “Airs by a Stream,” but it does not recur until several movements later, and once again, it shows up in an unexpected place. Toward the end of the “Royal March,” we
see the oscillation in the trumpet part (Ex. 2.5). Once again, this could be seen as a reminder that the devil still lurks in the background of the play, but it could also be a foreshadowing of the action to come: it is just after this movement that the soldier and the devil engage in their fateful card game.

Example 2.5. "The Royal March," mm. 85-87

The oscillation pattern makes a strong return in a very appropriate movement - "The Devil’s Dance." In this movement, the oscillations are too numerous to count, but one obvious example occurs in the contrabass part in m. 15 (Ex. 2.6). This representation of the oscillation motive is actually an accompaniment part, which is accompanied only by the solo clarinet part. “The Devil’s Dance” is a movement that could be considered, to use film terminology, diegetic music. The soldier plays his violin in order to bewitch the devil and make him dance until he is too exhausted to continue with his evil plan. Although the soldier’s attempt to control the devil works initially, the devil quickly regains his strength.

Example 2.6. "The Devil’s Dance," m. 15
The devil's oscillation motive returns with a vengeance in "The Devil's Song." In this movement, the oscillation pattern occurs repeatedly in the contrabass accompaniment part (Ex. 2.7). With very few exceptions, in fact, the accompaniment part consists only of the two oscillating notes. The simplicity of the music of this movement may be explained by the fact that the movement includes a vocal part which Stravinsky treated with great care and clearly wanted to keep at the forefront of the movement.

Example 2.7. "The Devil's Song," mm. 1-3

Another motive that Stravinsky uses to represent the devil is the repeated quarter-note motive. These repeated quarter notes can be any pitch, but are generally in the high register of the instrument being played. An interesting feature of this devil motive is that it subtly mirrors the march-like rhythms one of the soldier's motives. In the devil's case, the quarter notes generally only repeat for a few notes, so the feeling of a march does not necessarily exist. One of the best examples of the devil's repeating quarter notes is in a movement that combines the devil's motive with that of the soldier – "The Little Concert." The trombone solo begins with three B-flat quarter notes, and three measures later the clarinet plays a

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14 Balsama, Two Worlds, 11.
similar theme on a high C (Ex. 2.8). The soldier’s march-like rhythms make their entrance several measures later in the accompanying parts.

Example 2.8. “The Little Concert,” mm. 72-76

Repeating quarter notes also make an appearance in “The Devil’s Dance.” In mm. 4 and 5 of this movement, the motive appears in the trombone part once again, and the trumpet and strings join in at m. 5, as well (Ex. 2.9). Stravinsky uses the quarter note theme throughout this movement, which is appropriate considering the title of the movement and the significance it has for the character of the devil in the opera’s action. The clarinet also contributes to the repeated quarter note theme in several sections of the movement.

Example 2.9. “The Devil’s Dance,” mm. 4-5
While the repeating quarter note motive does not appear in "The Devil's Song," it returns strikingly in the movement where we would most expect to hear it: the "Triumphal March of the Devil." In this movement, the devil claims victory over the soldier and takes the soldier with him, presumably to hell, thus combining the worlds of the soldier and the devil for eternity. Even in the title of this movement, we can clearly see that the intent of the final movement of Histoire du soldat is to unite the earthly and supernatural worlds musically, in accordance with the story. Musically, we find the devil's quarter notes throughout the movement in many different instrumental parts. Once again, the first time this theme is played, the trombone carries the tune (Ex. 2.10). The quarter notes are doubled and echoed in many different instruments. The march rhythms representing the soldier also permeate this movement, though they are found mostly in the accompaniment parts. Stravinsky also uses syncopation and changing meter to represent the transformation of the soldier from a happy and respectable citizen into an unhappy, helpless man who is controlled by the entity to whom he sold his soul. Though some of these techniques can be found in the opening "The Soldier's March," the meter changes are far more frequent in "Triumphal March of the Devil" and syncopation is much more prevalent.

Example 2.10. "Triumphal March of the Devil," mm. 1-3
The instrumentation of certain movements solidifies the theme of duality in *Histoire du soldat*. Throughout the score, the violin and the drums seem to be in opposition to each other.\textsuperscript{15} If we assume that the violin represents the character of the soldier (which makes perfect sense considering that the soldier carries a violin with him at the beginning of the opera and plays it periodically throughout the work), then we can also assume that the drums represent the devil. We find one of the best examples of the duet between violin and drums, or soldier and devil, in the "Tango" movement of the "Three Dances" section of *Histoire*. For several measures at the beginning of the movement, the violin and drums play a duet entirely on their own. They are joined by the clarinet at the moment that the character of the princess rises from her bed and takes notice of the music, which suggests that the clarinet represents the princess in the same way that the violin and drums represent the soldier and the devil. This instance, however, is the only concrete example of the clarinet representing the princess.

In the "Triumphal March of the Devil," the violin and drums oppose each other and work together as a duet in different sections of the piece. Most notable in the movement are the measures in which the two instruments are woven together, such as mm. 58-75. A small representative of this section is given in Example 2.11 below. In this example, the violin and drums once again play their duet unaccompanied and their rhythms fit together seamlessly.

\textsuperscript{15} Balsama, *Two Worlds*, 9.
Example 2.11. “Triumphal March of the Devil,” mm. 60-63

Also significant is the way Stravinsky chooses to end the “Triumphal March of the Devil,” which also ends the work as a whole. In the last several measures of the work, the drums play alone, trailing off into the distance (Ex. 2.12). This ending certainly reinforces the idea that the drums represent the devil, since the instrumentation can be seen as a musical depiction of the devil carrying the soldier’s soul to hell.


Along with the musical themes of the soldier and the devil in *Histoire du soldat*, visual themes represent these two characters. Since this work is based on Afanassiev’s folk tale, “Le déserteur et le diable,” it is impossible to credit anyone with the inclusion of certain props and plot-details within the scenario, but the way those elements are used certainly bears some weight in the interpretation of the piece. Charles Ferdinand Ramuz, the librettist for *Histoire*, wrote the story in such a way that each character is represented by a certain object: the soldier is represented by the violin and the devil is represented by the book. Over the course
of the work, the violin becomes the prop that truly defines the interaction between the two main characters, helps to delineate the two worlds of the piece, and facilitates the movement of the characters between the two worlds.

_Histoire du soldat_ begins with the soldier alone, walking home on leave from the military. The soldier sits down to rest and pulls his violin out of his knapsack. He begins to play as the devil makes his appearance and continues to observe the soldier’s solo performance. The fact that the first scene in _Histoire_ features the soldier alone with the violin is significant since the violin becomes such an integral part of the story as it unfolds. Even more significant is the soldier’s decision actually to play the violin as he sits on the banks of the stream. Though the violin changes hands several times throughout the work, the two characters only play it a handful of times. These occasions mark very important moments in the story. The introduction of the protagonist and his representational prop is important in and of itself, but it also foreshadows the significance of the violin in the story: it is the object that gives the devil the opportunity to take over the soldier’s world and eventually remove the soldier from that world.

The importance of the violin immediately becomes obvious with the introduction of the devil’s representative prop, the book. The devil becomes fascinated by the soldier’s violin and offers the soldier a trade, violin for book. This is no ordinary book; it contains information not available to anyone but the soldier, about financial matters that could make the soldier rich beyond his wildest dreams. Initially, the soldier resists the trade, saying that the book is no good to him because he cannot read. The devil presses the soldier to take the book and look at it, and the
soldier discovers that he can, in fact, read it. This moment is all-important to the story because at the moment when the soldier touches the devil’s book, he is bound to take it. This decision to trade his prop for the devil’s will change the soldier’s life forever.

Even though the soldier and the devil are each fascinated with the other’s object, neither understands the other. The soldier can read the book, but he does not understand the information contained within its pages. The devil picks up the violin and tries to play it, but he is unable to produce the beautiful sounds that the soldier could. The two main characters must rely on each other for instructions on how to use the objects. The soldier seems content to simply listen to the devil explain how to use the book, but the devil has other ideas. In order to completely appropriate the violin and not only play the instrument, but truly master it, he invites the soldier to his home. At this point, the soldier becomes completely enveloped in the devil’s world. Although not a word is said in the libretto about the soldier actually teaching the devil how to play the violin while he is in the devil’s home, we do discover that the soldier has completely given himself over to the world of the devil with his gluttonous eating, drinking, and other forms of entertainment. The devil has promised the soldier that he only has to stay for three days, and at the end of those three days, he takes the soldier home.

Of course, the three days were actually three years, and when the soldier abandons the violin, he finds out the tragic truth. His family and friends cannot see him and his fiancée has married another man. As the soldier becomes lost in the memories of his former life, Stravinsky introduces the “Pastorale.” This section is all
about the soldier and his world, but, as noted above, we do hear a small piece of the
devil's motive within the "Pastorale." The oscillating sixteenth-note pattern seems
out of place, and it serves the dual purpose of shaking the soldier out of his reverie
and foreshadowing the next appearance of the devil. In this way, the characters and
the audience are reminded that no matter where the soldier is in the real world, the
devil is not far behind. It is interesting to note that during the "Pastorale" scene,
either the violin nor the book is visible to the audience. We find out a little later in
the action that the soldier has had the book in his knapsack the entire time, but has
forgotten about it. If the book truly does represent the devil, this could be
interpreted as the librettist's way of reminding the audience that every person has
an evil side—that all people carry with them the potential of participating in the
devil's world, even if they are unaware that the potential exists.

Now that the devil has interrupted the soldier, we have a moment of
transition concerning the representative props. The devil has reminded the soldier
of the book's existence, and he pulls the violin out and brandishes it in front of the
soldier. It would appear that by this point in the story the devil actually has control
over both the violin and the book and is manipulating them in order to gain control
over the soldier. Though the devil does not actually play the violin at this point, a
shift occurs here. The soldier now not only knows how to read the book, but he also
understand the information contained within it. He realizes at this point that he can
use the information to make money for himself and create a new life to replace the
one that he lost. At this point in the music, Stravinsky includes a reprise of "Airs By
a Stream," the tune from the beginning of Histoire that occurred before the devil had
been introduced as a character. When we hear it this time, the oscillating sixteenth notes of the devil are layered over the pastoral, reminiscent quality of the accompanying instrumentation. These sixteenth notes are present beginning in the second measure of the reprise but occur with much greater frequency after the soldier rips the devil's book to pieces. Perhaps the devil knows that the soldier has tried to destroy his valuable prop and presents the story of the princess as an act of retaliation.

In the card game scene, the devil becomes fully immersed in the world of the soldier. He even goes so far as to dress as a violinist, almost as if he were taking on the identity of the soldier, although the soldier is not a virtuoso violinist. The devil's dialogue during the card game provides an interruption in the scenario where the presence or mention of the representative props delineates the immersion of the characters in the dual worlds of Histoire. During the card game, the devil actually mentions both the violin and the book. As the soldier and the devil are settling the terms of the bets, the devil says, "No more fiddle, no more book, only a few pennies left and look..."¹⁶ Not only is the devil mentioning both of the props in his dialogue, but he also claims that the two have no meaning at that moment. I believe that in this scene, even though the devil is dressed as a violinist and has the soldier's violin in his lap during the game, the audience is likely to have the false impression that the two characters are finally on equal footing. It no longer matters that the devil is a supernatural entity with powers beyond human comprehension or that the soldier

is the most basic of human beings who was tempted by the promise of wealth.

Either of them could win this card game, and that makes them equal, at least for a short time.

Ironically, the devil begins to lose his power over the soldier as he wins more and more card games. The narrator has advised the soldier to get rid of all the money that originally belonged to the devil, and the strategy seems to have worked. The devil becomes physically weaker and weaker as he wins more and more card games. As the devil begins to falter, the soldier pours drinks down his throat until he is completely incapacitated. The soldier has won back his violin, and we are led to believe that he has defeated the devil once and for all. The soldier picks up his violin and begins to play, and we are uncertain once again. It is at this point that Stravinsky has included the “Three Dances” section of the work, and the first movement of the section is the “Tango,” in which the devil and the soldier are engaged in their musical battle through their representative instruments, the drum and the violin. We hear many of the devil’s motives, such as the oscillating sixteenth notes throughout the piece and the presence of the battery percussion part represented in this section of Histoire, and here we discover that our brief hope that the devil is gone was in vain.

When the music of the “Tango,” “Waltz,” and “Ragtime” comes to a close, the devil returns to the action. He tries to take the violin again, but this time the soldier does not give it up so easily. He now seems to understand that to give up his violin is to give up a piece of himself. Instead of allowing the devil to have the violin, the soldier begins to play again, and once again the music succeeds in weakening the
devil. Now the soldier is playing “The Devil’s Dance,” a piece of music that bewitches the devil into dancing uncontrollably. Succumbing yet again, the devil falls and is dragged offstage by the soldier and the princess. By now, believing that the devil is gone for good is somewhat difficult, and, of course, he does return. We hear “The Devil’s Song”, another piece that combines many of the themes of the two main characters. The devil and the soldier are almost musically interchangeable at this point since the violin is used in a primarily “devilish” piece of music.

Though the devil is weak, he is able to tempt the soldier one last time. The soldier is about to walk off with the princess when he gets the idea to look back at his previous life once more. This temptation proves to be his undoing, as the violin appears one last time. This last appearance of the violin is the only one in which the devil actually plays the instrument. The devil has now taken the essence of the soldier, and as a result, the world of the soldier ceases to exist. The devil leads the soldier offstage, playing the violin as they go.

The two representative props in the story, the violin and the book, each play an important part in delineating the two worlds in the story of Histoire du soldat. Though there are instances where the presence or mention of one or both of these objects causes questions in the mind of the audience, the struggle that each character undergoes in order to understand how to use the other’s prop is the basis of the story itself. Clearly, the violin becomes much more important to the story than the book, but one explanation for that may be that the soldier never really had a chance at defeating the devil. He could use the book only to give in to the
temptation of money, while the devil could use the violin to defeat the soldier completely.

The use of the French language in the vocal works of Stravinsky has long been a source of interest and debate. The sections of the score in which the vocal and instrumental parts intersect in *Histoire du soldat* mark one of Stravinsky’s first attempts to take the pronunciation of the French language into account while writing his music. In looking at the score for *Histoire*, we can see that the stressed syllables of the lyrics in the vocal pieces almost always fall on naturally stressed syllables in the music. One telling example of this relationship between text and music comes in “The Devil’s Song” toward the end of the work. The devil has a speaking part with notated rhythms, and the accompanimental parts in the violin and contrabass parts match up well with the speaking part. In m. 12 of the piece, however, a solo trombone plays a short passage, and the rhythmic notation of this passage indicates that it starts on an offbeat where no other instruments play. It is only one note, but it is the first note of the trombone solo and stands out for that reason if nothing else. This solo passage returns at the end of the piece and begins on the exact same offbeat. Example 2.13 shows the trombone solo passage from “The Devil’s Song.”

![Trombone](image)

Example 2.13. “The Devil’s Song,” mm. 12-15
One further consideration in analyzing *Histoire du soldat* is the religious
textual representation of the character of the devil. Stravinsky and Ramuz were both
Christians, but even Christian views of the devil vary so much that pinning down the
specific beliefs of any one person, let alone the combined efforts of two people is
impossible. One interesting consideration is whether or not hell actually exists.
Some Christians believe that the devil simply roams the Earth, spreading sin
throughout mankind. This theme certainly fits in with the storyline of *Histoire du
soldat*. When we first meet the devil in this story, he is roaming the countryside and
immediately upon his meeting with the soldier, he tries to tempt the soldier with
promises of gold and riches. We also know that the devil makes a habit of tempting
people and that in literature, more often than not, the devil is able to win over his
adversary. The devil is successful in his temptation of the soldier, and from that
point on, the soldier is tricked several times into believing that he will win in the
end. The loss of his soul – his home and his family – and not the loss of money or
even his life, is what breaks the soldier.

*Histoire du soldat*, a musical work in two parts with music by Igor Stravinsky and
libretto by Charles Ferdinand Ramuz, tells the story of the struggle between a devil
and a soldier. These two characters undergo many transformations in many
different forms throughout the work, but their ultimate goals remain the same. The
soldier wants to get home to his family and friends, even though he takes a detour to
the home of the devil following his initial temptation. The devil wants the soldier’s

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soul. Through several specific musical motives and the use of specific instruments, 
Stravinsky gives Histoire a level of depth that drama alone would not begin to touch. 
What, on the surface, is yet another story about the struggle between good and evil 
becomes the struggle between the world of fantasy and the real world, and 
Stravinsky masterfully combines the motives in such a way that the characters is the 
work are woven into a world that separates and comes back together until the devil 
wins for the final time and leads the soldier away.

During the performance of the “Great Chorale,” the narrator tells us, “You 
must not seek to add to what you have, what you once had; you have no right to 
share what you are with what you were. No one can have it all, that is forbidden. 
You must learn to choose between.”18 This is excellent advice, and if the soldier had 
been able to make a choice between the two worlds in which he had participated, he 
might have been able to win over the devil. In the end, the choice between the two 
worlds might not have been a choice at all.

18 Stravinsky, Histoire, 71.
Chapter Three

The Two Worlds of The Rake's Progress

In 1951, Stravinsky finished work on a full-length neoclassical opera called The Rake's Progress with librettists W.H. Auden and Chester Kallman. Again, two worlds are represented by Stravinsky in the musical score. The two main characters of the opera, Tom Rakewell and Nick Shadow, dance between Rakewell's "earthly" world and Shadow's "supernatural" world as the story unfolds. Stravinsky incorporates many different techniques in order to remind the listener of Shadow's world, and also to foreshadow important moments in The Rake's Progress.

Instrumentation, namely the use of the harpsichord, or cembalo, as it is notated in the score, is the primary way that Stravinsky chooses to delineate the worlds. The scoring of the cembalo prevails as the most discernible technique both in hearing the music and in looking at the score.

The presence of the cembalo in the accompaniment of The Rake's Progress lends itself to a unique interpretation of the two worlds Stravinsky aims to create in the opera. The cembalo represents the world of Nick Shadow and can serve several purposes within the piece – it can foreshadow to the audience those moments that will contribute to the creation of the world of Shadow, it can serve as a reminder of Shadow's world in past moments, and it can set the scene in the current action that takes place in Shadow's world in any given moment. The absence of cembalo in the accompaniment can have a similar effect on the audience. Stravinsky's careful use of the cembalo in the accompaniment of Rake makes an in-depth study of its use quite an enlightening experience.
In order to understand the way in which Stravinsky uses the cembalo to represent two worlds in *The Rake's Progress*, we must first understand the two worlds that exist within the storyline of the work. The first world is that of Tom Rakewell's earthly life and is already in existence before the opera begins. We find Rakewell enjoying the spoils of his earthly world when the opera opens in Trulove's garden. Anne Trulove herself personifies Rakewell's earthly world. She represents all that is good and pure in Rakewell's life. She loves him, even though he is not rich and has no ambition or motivation to speak of. She loves the person he is, not the person he could or should be. For this reason, any time Anne appears in the work, the earthly world she represents is also present in Stravinsky's score.

The second world in *The Rake's Progress* is that of the devil, or Nick Shadow, as we know him in the opera. Shadow's world is present throughout the majority of the work, even permeating Rakewell's earthly world at times. Nick Shadow himself personifies the "supernatural" world, and it is important to include Baba the Turk in this world since she is Anne Trulove's counterpart in the opera and would not exist as part of the action at all were it not for Shadow's insistence. In this chapter, I will give an overview of the cembalo parts in *The Rake's Progress* and explain how they represent Nick Shadow's supernatural world. I will also outline a brief theoretical summary of the twelve-note *style brisé*¹⁹ cembalo gestures, employed by Stravinsky to emphasize especially meaningful passages relating to Shadow's world.

The cembalo is not written as a continuous presence in the score, but rather, highlights significant moments in the world of Nick Shadow. A closer examination

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of these particular moments in the story lends weight to the theory that Stravinsky used instrumentation in his attempt to create two worlds in *Rake*. Perhaps the most obvious usage of the cembalo to create the world of the devil is the writing of cembalo passages in the style brisé at pivotal moments relating to Nick Shadow in the storyline. These cembalo gestures occur no less than five times throughout the course of the work. The first example of these occurs when Shadow makes his first appearance in the opera. In Act I, Scene 1, Shadow appears at the Trulove garden gate, and a gesture in the style brisé announces his arrival (Ex. 3.1). The compositional action taken by Stravinsky at this moment in the storyline sets the tone for the rest of the score since Nick Shadow’s entrance marks the beginning of the end for Tom Rakewell.

![Example 3.1. The Rake's Progress Act I, Scene 1 R48.1](image)

Now that the audience associates the cembalo glissando with Nick Shadow, Stravinsky can use the figure again to reinforce or foreshadow events that take place in Shadow’s world. The style brisé figure is echoed, albeit with different pitches, in the bassoon part after Shadow sings his first words and Rakewell answers. Although the strings provide a kind of percussive punctuation at certain points in the music, the bulk of the accompaniment in this recitative is left to the cembalo.
Additionally, later in this same recitative, we hear another cembalo passage in the style brisé. This occurs at Act I, Scene 1, just after the word “bright” (Ex. 3.2). Here, the cembalo seems to mock Rakewell, foreshadowing to the audience that the future Shadow offers to Rakewell will be anything but bright.

Example 3.2. *The Rake's Progress*, Act I, Scene 1 R49.1

Another figure in the style brisé occurs to announce the arrival of Nick Shadow in Act II, Scene 1 (Ex. 3.3). Shadow enters Tom Rakewell’s home with a picture of Baba the Turk and the idea that Tom should marry her. Here again, Shadow has plans for Tom’s future that do not bode well for his master, which are accompanied by the harpsichord.

Example 3.3. *The Rake's Progress*, Act II, Scene 1, R27.1-2

The gesture in the style brisé is echoed note for note two measures later, after Rakewell asks Shadow what he wants (Ex. 3.4).
Example 3.4. *The Rake’s Progress*, Act II, Scene 1, R27.3-4

The rest of the recitative is accompanied in a similar manner to the first—punctuation by the string section and continuing accompaniment by the cembalo.

This second recitative is different than the first, however, because at the end of the recitative, the string section becomes the predominant accompaniment and the cembalo drops out completely. Only when Shadow urges Rakewell to truly consider his words does the cembalo return in the accompaniment.

A telling moment in the cembalo accompaniment occurs during Rakewell’s breakfast with his new bride. At the end of Baba’s “breathless chatter,” Rakewell manages to get a word in edgewise after she asks him what is wrong. His answers are punctuated by two chords on the cembalo—the only place in the entire number where the cembalo makes this type of statement (Ex. 3.5). By this time in the scenario, Rakewell knows that marrying Baba was a mistake—it was a part of Shadow’s world, not the world that he had envisioned for himself all that time ago in the Trulove garden.

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Example 3.5. *The Rake's Progress*, Act II, Scene 3, R167.3-5

The next important moment in the cembalo part can be found just after the "pantomime" episode in Act II, Scene III. After Tom Rakewell wakes up from his dream, he utters the words, "Oh, I wish it were true."\(^{21}\) It is at this point that we hear another gesture in the style brisé from the cembalo (Ex. 3.6). This figure is written differently in the sense that only the first eleven notes are beamed together in the score. The twelfth pitch is clearly part of the figure, but is beamed separately. The cembalo drops out of the accompaniment immediately after this figure.

Example 3.6. *The Rake's Progress*, Act II, Scene 3, R193.2-4

This moment is significant in the scenario of the opera. It represents the second time that Rakewell makes a wish and watches it come true. It is also another

moment when Nick Shadow takes control of Rakewell’s life. Rather than allow Rakewell to sit at home and brood about his “dream,” Shadow provides Rakewell with the fake bread machine. Interestingly, in an early plot synopsis found in Stravinsky and Robert Craft’s book *Memories and Commentaries*, the bread machine was originally conceived as a machine that would turn seawater into gold. As a result of the creation of this machine, Rakewell completes his downfall and loses everything he owns. Since his inability to pay his debt to Shadow results in the climactic card game in the cemetery, the pantomime and its subsequent events fall firmly into the world of Nick Shadow. The cembalo returns as Shadow explains the logistics of what needs to be done with the machine in order for Tom to make his supposed fortune. Again, Shadow controls the situation in order to ensure his victory over Tom at the end of the opera.

Act III contains two remarkable moments in the cembalo part before the finale. We hear a few accompanying chords during the auction scene, the first of which occurs as Sellem puts the first lot up for sale (Ex. 3.7).

![Example 3.7. The Rake’s Progress, Act III, Scene 1, R50.1-2](image)

This moment in Act III serves as a reminder to the audience that Nick Shadow’s influence in Rakewell’s life has only yielded negative results. Because of Shadow,  

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Rakewell has lost his fortune and his belongings are to be sold at auction. We can also hear accompanying chords when Sellem approaches the covered Baba before trying to auction her off as well. (Ex. 3.8).

Example 3.8. *The Rake’s Progress*, Act III, Scene 1, R85.1-3

Nick Shadow was responsible for Tom and Baba’s marriage in the first place, and hearing cembalo chords at this point in the scenario reminds the audience that anything dealing with Baba is part of Nick Shadow’s world. Even though Baba advises Anne Trulove to pursue Rakewell shortly after this point, she simply reinforces to the listener that she is part of Shadow’s world while Anne is part of the “earthly” world that Tom left behind.

The next time we hear the cembalo as part of the accompaniment in *The Rake’s Progress* is at the climax of the work, both in terms of the scenario and in the music. Shadow leads Rakewell to the cemetery and demands payment for his services. At this point, Rakewell discovers Shadow’s true identity as the devil. The strings provide the accompaniment while this all-important discovery happens. The cembalo returns at the moment that Shadow informs Rakewell of his last chance to escape the fate Shadow has planned for him, in Act III, Scene 2. Stravinsky now totally and completely submerges the listener into Shadow’s world, and the
accompaniment reinforces that in a very obvious way. The strings drop out of the accompaniment altogether and the cembalo alone accompanies Shadow's solo recitative.

We now reach the decisive card game, that favorite plot point of Stravinsky and his collaborators. The card game will decide Rakewell's fate, and Shadow believes he has fixed the game to ensure his own victory. Ironically, it is Rakewell who provides the deck of cards for the game – he happens to have it in his pocket. Perhaps this subtly reminds us that while Shadow has tricked Rakewell in many ways, it is actually Rakewell's choices that have put him in this position in the first place. Had Rakewell simply taken Father Trulove's advice and gotten an honest job rather than wait for Shadow to appear and offer him the easy way out, Rakewell would now likely be married to Anne and living comfortably without this hellish debt to pay. Once Shadow utters the words, "Let us begin," and selects the first card, we hear a prominent gesture in the cembalo part (Ex. 3.9).

Example 3.9. The Rake's Progress, Act III, Scene 2, R186.8

This chord amounts to a D major seventh chord in first inversion. The way the notes are staggered, together with the seventh added to the chord, helps the arpeggio retain somewhat of an unresolved quality, and it does catch the attention

\footnote{Stravinsky, The Rake's Progress, 344.}
of the audience in an unmistakable way. After this arpeggio sounds, the cembalo accompaniment truly begins in earnest. The accompaniment includes arpeggiated chord after arpeggiated chord, cycling through several different keys, both juxtaposed and superimposed as Rakewell and Shadow play their game of cards. The treble and bass clef parts during the card game are most definitely competing against each other and creating a high level of tension for the listener. Stravinsky pits minor chords against major and rising arpeggios against falling arpeggios to maximize the uncomfortable feeling of this section of the score. This particular card game is unique from the others that Stravinsky has presented in Histoire and Jeu in that the two characters are not playing what one might consider to be a fair game. Shadow wants Rakewell to guess which card he holds in his hand. This does not require talent or wits, but pure luck. Rakewell is in a seemingly impossible position.

The D major seventh gesture is the first in a set of gestures in the style brisé that occurs as the game progresses. More specifically, we hear a gesture the second time Shadow selects a card (Ex. 3.10), and we hear another each time Rakewell receives the inspiration for his first two guesses (Ex. 3.11 and 3.12). All of these are exactly the same in terms of pitches, and they all occur on the downbeat of a measure. These gestures serve to unite these moments in the mind of the listener.
Example 3.10. *The Rake's Progress*, Act III, Scene 2, R190.1

Example 3.11. *The Rake's Progress*, Act III, Scene 2, R187.5


Just as the use of the cembalo represents Shadow's world in *Rake*, so does the lack of cembalo at significant moments in the score indicate a brief return to
Rakewell’s “earthly” world. As Shadow overcomes his momentary anger at Rakewell for his first two successful guesses, he tells Rakewell to “think on his hopes”\(^{24}\) at rehearsal number 193 and prepares to pick up the discarded Queen of Hearts. Tom replies, “O God what hopes have I?”\(^{25}\) The accompaniment changes at this point from solo cembalo to a woodwind section for seven measures. This change seems quite innocuous unless the listener remembers the two worlds of *The Rake’s Progress*. What could have happened to effect this sudden and brief change? It could very well be Rakewell’s mention of God. For seven measures, Rakewell says a prayer to a being who is the exact opposite of Shadow, and the instrumentation of this section reflects that. After his initial mention of God, however, Rakewell is drawn back into the card game with Shadow, and the melodic line of the woodwind group echoes Rakewell’s descent back into Shadow’s world. The cembalo returns when Shadow reveals his trickery to the audience.

Rakewell searches for the inspiration for his final guess, and when he hears Anne’s voice from offstage, he has found it. The cembalo drops out and Anne sings unaccompanied (Ex. 3.13). The tonality changes from Tom’s B-minor plea to Anne’s G-minor encouragement.

\(^{24}\) Stravinsky, *The Rake’s Progress*, 349.

\(^{25}\) Stravinsky, *The Rake’s Progress*, 349.
Rakewell exclaims that he "wishes for nothing else" and we hear the final style brisé figure in the cembalo part (Ex. 3.14). Once Rakewell realizes that his true love will save him, he is lifted from the world of Nick Shadow and the accompaniment shifts from cembalo to strings and, eventually, the full orchestra.

Example 3.14. The Rake's Progress, Act III, Scene 2, R197.10

26 Stravinsky, The Rake's Progress, 352.
The penultimate cembalo accompaniment occurs when the keeper of Bedlam explains Rakewell’s malady in Act III, Scene III, informing Anne that Rakewell believes himself to be Adonis and will only answer to that name. This cembalo moment is likely a reminder that Tom’s dalliance with Shadow’s world caused him to end up in Bedlam. We hear the final cembalo chords at R. 260 (Ex. 3.15) as Father Trulove tells Anne that it is time to leave and Anne tells Rakewell goodbye.

Example 3.15. The Rake’s Progress, Act III, Scene 3, R260.1-10
Again, we are reminded of the role of Shadow’s world at this moment since Rakewell’s participation in that world causes this tragic end. At this point, the listener must be wondering who actually won the card game – Shadow or Rakewell. I argue that even though Rakewell ended up in Bedlam, he was the winner of the card game. The accompaniment proves this at the moment Shadow condemns Rakewell to spend the rest of his life in Bedlam. If Shadow had won the game, the cembalo would have returned in full force to emphasize the point. In *Histoire du soldat*, Stravinsky used instrumentation to reinforce the fact that the devil wins the card game – the drum, which represents the devil throughout the piece, is the last instrument to be heard as the soldier follows the devil to hell. Instead, in *Rake*, the strings and assorted wind instruments continue the accompaniment as Shadow fades slowly out of sight. Also reinforcing the idea of Rakewell’s victory is the accompaniment at the end of the work. As the final quintet sings their warning to the audience, the cembalo remains silent. Even Shadow himself seems to concede the victory as he claims he wishes not to exist at all.

A theoretical analysis of the five gestures (actually six, but one is repeated note for note) in the style brisé yields interesting results. The simplest way to illustrate the analysis of these gestures is to create a table that depicts them. (Table 3.1). Each figure in the style brisé can be divided into three groups of four pitches. The first group of pitches is best understood when analyzed chordally. These four pitches form a fully diminished seventh chord in each gesture. The second group of four pitches should be analyzed atonally. The pitch class set of this group of “middle” tetrachords changes with each gesture. The last tetrachord of each gesture
in the style brisé is a scalar gesture of some kind. They are more difficult to analyze because they tend to be somewhat ambiguous, but they do move from an open structure to a more closed structure as the opera progresses. In Table 3.1, the diminished seventh chords, atonal pitch class sets, and scalar figures are described in the right column.

Table 3.1 Style brisé gestures in *The Rake's Progress*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shadow</th>
<th>First Tetrachord: B⁷ chord</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cembalo</td>
<td>Second Tetrachord: (0257)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Third Tetrachord: descending scalar gesture</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The Rake's Progress Act I, Scene 1 R. 48*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shadow</th>
<th>First Tetrachord: E⁷</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cembalo</td>
<td>Second Tetrachord: (0258)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Third Tetrachord: descending scalar gesture (chromatic)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The Rake's Progress, Act I, Scene 1 R. 49*
One of the most obvious ways to represent a character or idea in a piece of programmatic music is to assign it a particular instrument in the score. Once the
audience hears that instrumental representation for the first time, it can associate
the instrument with the character or idea and recognize the interpretation quickly
and easily. Romantic and 19th-century composers were quite fond of using
instrumentation to guide their audiences through programmatic works, from some
of Richard Wagner's leitmotifs to Sergei Prokofiev's 1936 composition Peter and the
Wolf to Igor Stravinsky's Histoire du soldat and The Rake's Progress, just to name a
few. A closer look at these instrumental representations can enhance the
experience of listening to the music and can help the listener to understand the
story and appreciate the details that composers and librettists cannot put into
words. The study of ways in which Stravinsky represents characters and ideas in
his works can also contribute to a greater understanding of his techniques and
methods in both programmatic and absolute music.
Chapter 4

The Two Worlds of *Jeu de Cartes*

I have always enjoyed card games, and almost always been interested in cartomancy. I have been a card player, moreover, ever since I learned *durachki* as a child. Poker was a favorite pastime during the composition of *Jeu de Cartes*, as Chinese checkers was during the composition the *Rake*.  

Judging from this quotation, it would seem that Stravinsky had the material for *Jeu de Cartes* in front of him for most of his life. Instead of focusing on poker as the plot of a ballet early in his career, however, he waited until 1935 to bring the idea to fruition. His collaborators for this work were famed choreographer, George Balanchine, and a friend of his son Soulima, Nikita Malayev. Stravinsky greatly valued Malayev's assistance with refining the scenario of the ballet, but kept a close eye on how much credit Malayev received for his effort. Malayev was named as co-author of the libretto in the piano reduction, but when Stravinsky saw the program for the work's premiere, he demanded that Malayev's name be removed altogether.  

At first glance, the two worlds of the scenario of *Jeu de Cartes* are not immediately obvious. In Andrew Westerhaus's dissertation, he asserts that Stravinsky's choice to use games not only in the scenario of *Jeu*, but also in the compositional techniques such as the borrowing of melodies from other composers and even from Stravinsky's previous works creates a kind of cover for Stravinsky's

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methods. That Stravinsky disguises his techniques by playing games with the audience adds a layer of depth to the two worlds by creating layers of illusion and reality in the score. Stravinsky’s collaboration with Balanchine also adds to the duality inherent to the work, especially considering that even though Stravinsky maintained rigid control over every aspect of Jeu, his respect for Balanchine led to much more compromise than was usual for the composer.

The ballet utilizes only one set throughout the performance, and the characters are all dressed very much alike. To find the two worlds of Jeu in the scenario, one must examine the situations in which the Joker plays a pivotal role in the action. The first of these situations occurs in the first deal at R21. At this point in the scenario, the Joker has revealed himself for the first time as a member of one of the equal straights and has found himself on the losing side of the hand. The music changes drastically from the calm dancing tune of the jacks and queens to the irate stringendo music of the Joker’s rage. Interestingly, the Joker had revealed himself earlier in the deal to very little fanfare at R20. When he is revealed as part of a straight, the other cards pay very little attention until he throws a fit. This blissful ignorance of the Joker’s tantrum on the part of the other cards clues the audience in to the very separate worlds in Jeu. As hard as the Joker tries to cause turmoil in the world of the rest of the deck of cards, they carry on with their calm dances as if he does not exist at all. The music mimics the Joker’s rage until R34, a

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section marked “tranquillo” in which the other cards demonstrate that they are
unmoved by the Joker’s tantrum.

Two of Stravinsky’s compositional choices during the Joker’s rage of the first
deal can be culled from the music and attributed to the Joker’s devilish character.
Stravinsky made multiple changes to represent the rage of the Joker. The time
signature changes from 4/4 to a choppier 2/4. The key changes from D major to F
minor, and Stravinsky adds other pitches that go beyond the diatonic framework.
Most notably, however, is the tempo change. As the Joker finds himself in a losing
position in the hand of cards, he is represented by a faster tempo and shorter note
values. Immediately at R21, the string section begins playing a jagged sixteenth-
note pattern (Ex. 4.1) that is echoed first by the trumpets (Ex. 4.2) and then by the
woodwind section (Ex. 4.3).


Example 4.2. *Jeu de Cartes*, R22.1-2
Example 4.3. *Jeu de Cartes*, R22.1-3

The sixteenth pattern begins to fragment after R28. The oboe part now includes sixteenth-note figures that begin on an offbeat rather than a strong beat (Ex. 4.4). This figure becomes a defining characteristic of the Joker as the ballet progresses. The fragmenting of the music continues in various patterns until the tranquillo section ends the tirade.

Example 4.4. *Jeu de Cartes*, R28.3-4

The next time we hear the fragmented sixteenth-note pattern is immediately after the tranquillo section begins. The two violin parts repeat the figure as a kind of sinister accompaniment to the pleasant melody played by the flutes and clarinets (Ex. 4.5). This suggests that even though the cards are not moved by the Joker's
outbursts, he cannot be completely ignored. Both the audience and the other cards are reminded of the Joker’s presence through the sixteenth-note pattern in the strings.

Example 4.5. *Jeu de Cartes*, R34.1-6

The second deal is dominated by the theme and variations danced by the Jack of Hearts and the four queens. When the Joker makes his appearance, again there is no particular fanfare to announce his unmasking. The Joker sees that he and the four aces that make up the rest of his hand will win, and in the place of the rage at his loss in the first deal, the Joker reacts with glee at his victory and chases the queens offstage. At the moment when the chase begins, we hear a fragmented sixteenth note pattern in the violins (Ex. 4.6).

As the chase progresses, the fragments move to the clarinet section. This time, they are in groups of two rather than three and become closer in proximity (Ex. 4.7). A pursuit is certainly suggested by the running sixteenth notes in other instrument parts, but it is the fragmented parts that suggest the Joker's presence.


In the third deal, the sixteenth note patterns of the previous two deals are no longer present. Instead, we see a kind of augmentation of the pattern, with several figures in different instrumental parts beginning on an offbeat. Specifically, in the string parts beginning at R126, the violas begin on an offbeat, followed by the two violin parts (Ex. 4.8). This moment occurs at the point in the ballet when the Joker has been revealed and discovers that one of the other hands holds a royal flush, which he will be unable to beat no matter what form he takes.

Example 4.8. *Jeu de Cartes*, 126.1-7
The Joker collapses just before R152 and the other cards celebrate his demise with a gesture in the oboes and cornets that mimics the syncopated eighth note pattern (Ex. 4.9). Once the Joker is taken off stage by the other cards, this pattern no longer appears in the musical accompaniment.

![Musical notation]


Stravinsky is well known for the use of juxtaposed musical figures in many of his works, including *The Rake's Progress* and *Jeu de Cartes*. As indicated in the discussion of Tom Rakewell and Nick Shadow's pivotal cemetery scene in *Rake* in Chapter 3 of this study, pitting ascending and descending musical figures against each other creates a certain sense of unrest that portrays evil characters like the devil perfectly. These juxtaposed figures can be found throughout the entirety of *Jeu de Cartes* and are always connected with the Joker. The first of these figures occurs just after the Joker has revealed himself for the first time. In this instance, Stravinsky chooses to pit the clarinets against the bassoons (Ex. 4.10).
Example 4.10. Jeu de Cartes, R22.5-6

As the Joker’s rage continues, so do the juxtapositions. Just as this deal is reaching its climax, we hear a more prominent figure in the upper woodwind and violin parts (Ex. 4.11). Since both figures are placed within high-register instruments and the sheer number of instruments is greater than in the first example, they are far easier for the audience to distinguish, and the unstable feeling surrounding the Joker grows.

Example 4.11. Jeu de Cartes, R24.4
The first deal contains one final instance of juxtaposition between the bassoons and the second violins (Ex. 4.12). This occurs at the end of the deal, as if to remind the audience one last time that the Joker is not to be trusted and that the game is far from over.

![Musical notation](image)

Example 4.12. *Jeu de Cartes*, R32.4

The juxtaposition figures in the second deal are conspicuous by their absence. This deal obviously features the four queens, escorted by the Jack of Hearts. The clever use of the theme and variations by Stravinsky insures that each queen and each suit receive their share of the spotlight, but the Joker’s musical features are nowhere to be found. As we know, the Joker is onstage at this point, but still wears his mask. The audience likely takes on the awareness of the unmasked cards that the Joker is among them, which means that none of the unrest caused by simultaneously ascending and descending figures cannot be present until the Joker reveals himself at R92. In this section of the music, we instantly hear juxtaposed figures in the two clarinet parts (Ex. 4.13). The juxtaposition only occurs in two sixteenth notes of each measure, but the intent is clearly there. This figure is repeated for several
measures as the Joker begins to pursue the queens and eventually moves to the string parts.


We hear a noticeable juxtaposed figure just prior to R96 that pits the flutes and second violins against the first bassoon part (Ex. 4.14). This figure is somewhat more exposed than some of the previous examples, so the bassoon does not have to fight with a great number of other instruments in order to be heard.

Example 4.14. *Jeu de Cartes*, R95.5-6

The final two measures of the second deal reveal the most deliberate example of the juxtaposed figure. The score only includes the flutes and clarinets at this juncture, so even the pianissimo dynamic marking cannot conceal this telling gesture (Ex. 4.15). The Joker has been pursuing the queens after their individual dances, and
although Stravinsky is quite vague about the Joker's intentions once the chase is over, the placement of the juxtaposed figure as the last thing the audience hears in the second deal leaves no question as to whether the Joker has achieved his goal. Not only has he won at this hand of cards, but he also claims victory over his pursuit of the four most powerful females in the card game.

Example 4.15. *Jeu de Cartes*, R116.5-6

Juxtaposed instrumental parts do not figure prominently in the third deal until the Joker believes that he has won the final hand. After his hand has removed their masks and triumphed over the first hand, we hear a solo flute and clarinet play a long juxtaposed passage which conveys the Joker's glee at the prospect of winning the hand and the instability that the audience feels at the idea of a devilish victory. This final example of juxtaposed sixteenth note rhythms represents the last time in *Jeu de Cartes* that the Joker, or devil, rules the game. Soon after this, the Joker realizes that the heart straight has won the hand and he has lost the game. He presents himself to the hearts hand, collapses, and is carried off stage to the enjoyment of the rest of the deck.
There can be no question which of the two worlds of *Jeu de Cartes* wins out in the end. The Joker, who functions as the devil in this work, meets a definitive demise at the end, and his death is celebrated by the other characters. The most interesting aspect of the two worlds in *Jeu* is the fact that the worlds do not seem to intersect at any point. The Joker lives and functions in his world of trickery, deceit, and wrath without having much of an effect on the other cards. That the rest of the characters can remain so calm and go about their usual business with little negative emotion creates a marked difference between *Jeu* and the works discussed previously, whose characters are constantly overcome with indecision and guilt while under the influence of the devil characters. Perhaps it is this attitude by the supporting characters that causes the Joker to, in Stravinsky's own words, "win all battles, but lose the war."\(^{31}\)

Chapter 5
Conclusions

*Histoire du soldat*, *The Rake’s Progress*, and *Jeu de Cartes* are beautifully unique musical works that share a common theme. Stravinsky and his collaborators were able to use card games to lend a sense of evil and uncertainty to the scenarios and musical scores of the works. The card games in each work pit good against evil and the outcomes determine the fates of the main characters. That Stravinsky was able to write such distinctive music for very similar situations is a remarkable feat. Stravinsky’s compositional choices in the three works reflect techniques used by many composers, including Stravinsky himself in other works, to highlight characters and induce certain feelings in the audience. These compositional processes make *Histoire, Rake, and Jeu* stand out as some of the best of Stravinsky’s career.

The devil in *Histoire du soldat* asserts himself as a villain immediately in the scenario. Through a series of disguises, he deftly controls the life of the soldier and changes him from a respectable, hard-working fellow with a simple but enjoyable life into an unhappy man who finds love only to lose it in the end. The narrator’s suggestion that the soldier repay his debt to the devil by losing to him at a game of cards provides the soldier with an opportunity to right the wrong he has committed and regain control of his soul. The soldier loses the card game but wins his soul and the hand of the princess. On his way to a happy new life, the soldier stops to reminisce about his hometown and family. When he tries to take one more look, the
devil prevents him from doing so by telling him that he cannot have everything he wants. The soldier follows the devil off stage to the beat of a foreboding drum in the final measures.

Stravinsky chooses to use instrumentation as his primary means of identifying and developing two worlds in *Histoire du soldat*. The drum represents the devil while the violin stands for the soldier in the musical score. Stravinsky inserts these instruments into the score in moments of foreshadowing, intense action, and to remind the characters of each other. Whether they are heard as solo instruments, in duets with each other, or together with the rest of the instruments, the audience knows which world they are a part of at any given moment in the scenario by listening to the instrumentation.

The devil is attracted to the soldier by the sound of his violin, and once it becomes an integral part of the scenario, the audience associates the soldier with the violin, as well. When the devil offers to trade the violin for a book of financial information from the future, the two worlds of *Histoire* are solidified onstage. Each time the audience sees the devil with the violin, it serves as a reminder that the soldier's world is close at hand. When the soldier uses the devil's book, he becomes more firmly entrenched in the world of the devil. In this way, Stravinsky and his collaborators present the true world of the soldier and the supernatural, evil world of the devil in a way that the audience can easily relate to.

Instrumentation comes to the forefront again in *The Rake's Progress*. In this opera, Stravinsky chooses the cembalo, or harpsichord, as the primary means of establishing Nick Shadow's world. Often, a style brisé figure introduces a point in
the scenario when Tom Rakewell is particularly influenced by Rakewell’s world of evil. The earthly world inhabited by Anne Trulove does not have a representative instrument, but her world is sometimes indicated by the sudden lack of cembalo in the score. When Tom Rakewell thinks of Anne, the cembalo is nowhere to be found. In the pivotal cemetery scene at the end of the opera, the cembalo takes over as Nick Shadow challenges Rakewell to a game of cards since Rakewell has lost all his money and cannot repay his debt. The choice to use the cembalo along with the juxtaposition of arpeggios and keys creates an unmistakable air of discomfort and suspense as the two struggle for Rakewell’s soul. In the end, although Rakewell wins the card game, he is doomed to insanity by Shadow. This is very similar to what happens to the soldier in *Histoire*, but since Rakewell and Anne Trulove have a chance to reunite in the afterlife, the question of who actually won the game in the cemetery is much murkier. I believe that Stravinsky and his collaborators intend for the audience to interpret Tom Rakewell as the winner of the game.

*Jeu de Cartes* presents a unique problem when compared with the previous two works. Since the entire work is a game of poker and the characters are cards in the deck, it would be easy to see only one world in the static set and story. In fact, the two worlds in *Jeu* are delineated by the Joker, who I believe represents the devil. That the Joker shares personality traits and musical figures with the devil characters in Stravinsky’s other works supports this idea. Also important is the lack of reaction of the other cards when the Joker tries to influence them with his fits of anger. While the Joker rages about his losses, the rest of the deck dances placidly on. They
choose not to be part of his world. In the end, the Joker is soundly and fairly beaten, collapsing at the feet of the King of Hearts.

The endings of *Histoire*, *Rake*, and *Jeu* lead to an interesting insight into Stravinsky's music and the minds of his collaborators. In *Histoire*, the devil wins, but only because the soldier wanted to be true to his heart and see his first love. In *Rake*, Tom Rakewell wins over the devil with the help of his true love, Anne, in the cemetery but must spend the rest of his short life in Bedlam. With the chance to reunite again some distant day, Rakewell wins his heart's desire. In *Jeu*, the Joker is soundly defeated at the hands of a royal flush. It cannot be coincidence that the hearts were the suit that Stravinsky chose to defeat the Joker. If we are to learn a lesson from Stravinsky's interpretations of *Histoire du soldat*, *The Rake's Progress*, and *Jeu de Cartes*, it should be that the heart always wins.
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