

A Woman Apart:
Gender and Society in Selected Works of Irmtraud Morgner, Christa Wolf, Rainer
Werner Fassbinder, and Heinrich Böll

by

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Introduction

This thesis examines the way women are portrayed within selected works of German literature from the time period between the end of the Second World War and the Reunification of East and West Germany in 1990. This time period provides insight into the way the division between East Germany and West Germany, as manifested in the dominant political ideologies and social practices of the two societies, is reflected in literary representations of women and their status within society. The difference between West Germany, with its more traditional view of women, and East Germany, with its comparatively radical ideas on women's role in society, is one that is significant and manifests itself within the literature of the time. I draw conclusions from both the similarities and differences in the way that women are portrayed within the selected works from East and West Germany, and discuss trends and commonalities within and across the two societies.

The four works I examine are *Die Hexe im Landhaus: Gespräch in Solothurn* by Irmtraud Morgner, *Kassandra* by Christa Wolf, *Bremer Freiheit* by Rainer Werner Fassbinder, and *Billiard um Halbzehn* by Heinrich Böll.* I chose these four works because they allow for a comparison between diverse authors and narrative styles. Yet although the authors come from varied backgrounds and use different literary styles and characters, the themes their works display are in many ways similar.

Rainer Werner Fassbinder and Heinrich Böll lived and wrote in West Germany in the decades immediately following the end of the Second World War. Christa Wolf and Irmtraud Morgner lived and wrote in the former East Germany in

* These titles translate to *The Witch in the Country House: A Conversation in Solothurn*, *Cassandra*, *Bremen Freedom*, and *Billiards at Half-Past Nine*.

the 1970s and 1980s, not long before the fall of the German Democratic Republic (GDR). The different backgrounds of these authors enhance my comparison, by giving diversity to the themes and literary styles addressed in this thesis, as well as by providing added significance to those similarities found within the works. Issues and themes important enough to be addressed by these four very different authors facilitate a comparison between the East and West, and allow us to draw conclusions about which aspects of gender within German society crossed national divides.

Not only do the authors vary greatly, but so do the literary genres of their works. *Bremer Freiheit* is a play, making it the exception to the narrative and expository prose offered by the works of the other authors. This format means that the reader has no direct access to the minds of the characters and their motivations, as the reader sees only their actions and reactions. For this reason the actions of the protagonist Geesche, and the reactions of the members of her society with which she interacts, are all that is available to the reader in analyzing the presentation of women in the work. This provides an interesting comparison to works such as Böll's *Billiard um Halbzehn* or Wolf's *Kassandra*, in which the representation of the female protagonist is primarily provided through her thoughts in the form of an interior monologue. Böll's novel is told through first person narration with a shifting perspective that gives insight into the minds of many characters. This provides the reader with both an external and internal view of each character. In this thesis I focus on the portrayal of Johanna Fähmel, the wife of Heinrich and mother of Robert, although the novel follows the entire Fähmel family and their close acquaintances across many generations and changes in society. *Kassandra* tells the story of

Cassandra, the daughter of King Priam and Queen Hecuba of Troy in Greek mythology. Wolf uses stream-of-consciousness narration from the point of view of the protagonist. Her narration flashes back and forth between Cassandra's present condition shortly after being captured in the fall of Troy and her past life growing up in Trojan society. The format of Morgner's *Die Hexe im Landhaus* is unique in comparison with the other selected works, as it is a transcript of a reading she gave, in which she reads excerpts from her novel *Amanda. Ein Hexenroman** and the unpublished book that was to follow *Amanda*. The format of *Die Hexe im Landhaus* brings valuable diversity to the selection of textual formats, as it contains not only literary passages providing depictions of women in the GDR, but also Morgner's own reflections on those passages and insight into her views on gender relations.

The settings of the novels vary in many ways as well, ranging from Morgner's fictionalized contemporary society of the late 20th century to Wolf's ancient Greece, from Fassbinder's 1820s Bremen to Böll's Köln spanning the years 1880-1958. The setting of each work is crucial to the message conveyed, and serves as another example of the variation in literary form that makes the comparison of these four works a particularly interesting one.

Although the four works are different in the ways discussed above, namely textual format, narrative style, and setting, they all contain a similar structure with regard to their depiction of women in society. In each work the most prominent female figure finds herself disenchanted with the society in which she has been raised and in which she has learned what it means to be a woman. Thus each work

* The title in English would be *Amanda: A Witch's Tale*.

demonstrates indirectly, in its depiction of these figures, what the ideal woman is in the society portrayed, and shows one woman's attempt to reject that given identity and to find a new one. Although each character makes a valiant attempt to create a new identity, and in many cases succeeds to some extent, she ultimately fails and is forced back into the expectations of society and punished for her attempt to break free. This similarity in structure is another reason to compare these particular literary works. There is also a similar message contained in all four, one which can be interpreted as saying that unless society itself is changed, no woman will be able to change her place within it. This shared message is especially meaningful when one considers that the four works were written by both male and female authors in very different societies and across two decades, within which women had different roles and expectations.

This general pattern in which the female characters attempt to break free from society and are ultimately forced back into its boundaries is not the only similarity between these four pieces of literature. There are five recurring themes that appear to some extent in each work, and these will be the main focus of this thesis.

The first of these themes is how the female character defines herself in relation to the society in which she lives. All four works portray a woman trying to reconcile the subjective reality that she experiences in her mind with the objective reality of the surrounding world. This manifests as a search for an "I" identity in relation to the "we" and "them" that constitute society. In each work this struggle for self-definition in relation to the external society is one that the female character must face, either by re-examining her idea of who she is as an individual or by attempting

to discover a new objective reality in which to exist. This struggle is often irresolvable, hence the failure of the female character to change her society and her position within it.

The second theme relates to silence and vocalization, and how the power of speech is determined within society. In many of these works the ability to speak, and therefore to influence others, is confined to men, and the female character's struggle for self-definition involves a fight for men to listen.

The third theme I wish to examine, related to the second, is the portrayal of sexuality and gender relations. I will look at how female sexuality is portrayed and how men and women relate to each other within both the sexual realm and the wider societal realm. These interactions display the difficulties many of the female characters have in attempting to reconcile their subjective reality, in which men and women are equal, with the objective reality determined by society, which often sees men as superior.*

The fourth theme is independence, namely the ability to determine one's identity as an individual living within a subjective a reality, which is not dependent upon the values of the external world. Many of the selected works display a character's attempt to break free from those boundaries of society that trap women and make them dependent upon men for either personal or economic support.

Along these lines is the theme of separation, which the female protagonist faces in each work. This isolation takes many forms, ranging from Morgner's

* This thesis discusses gender as a dichotomy between male and female, as the works of literature examined present gender this way. Although much has been written on the concept of gender as a socially-constructed concept that cannot be limited to these two categories, the works of Morgner, Wolf, Fassbinder, and Böll present societies comprised of individuals who identify and are identified by others as men and women.

portrayal of women as witches, to Wolf's *Kassandra*, who is separated by her very power as a seer and her discovery of an alternate society comprised solely of women, to Fassbinder's *Geesche* who becomes a murderer to escape the male-dominated society in which she is trapped, and ultimately to Böll's main female character *Johanna Fähhmel*, who is physically isolated, as she has been living in a sanatorium for many years, and is further isolated by her insistence on following her strict moral code within a society that does not share the same values.

To begin, I look at each novel separately, examining initially how the thoughts and behavior of the characters depict the ideal female in the society in which the novel is set. I look at how the main female characters react to these societal expectations, what role each attempts to create for herself as a woman within that society, and how that relates to the previously determined gender expectations. I also examine how successful these characters are in this attempt to define themselves and their society. I will outline how these themes of objective vs. subjective reality, silence, sexuality and gender relations, independence, and separation play out in each work.

I will then analyze the four works in relation to one another, looking at their similarities and their differences. My hypothesis was that many of the larger themes would be the same, but that the literary techniques used, especially in regards to character and setting, might be quite different. I see the differences in the time periods of the writing and the authors' past experiences as important to examine as well, as I believe that this provides at least a partial explanation for some of the differences I find. Ultimately my goal is to discover what conclusions, if any, can be made about

the portrayal of women in West German literature in comparison to that within East German literature.

Chapter One:
Irmtraud Morgner's *Die Hexe im Landhaus: Gespräch in Solothurn*

Die Hexe im Landhaus: Gespräch in Solothurn is a transcript of a reading given by author Irmtraud Morgner in Switzerland, and the interview and conversation that followed. Irmtraud Morgner was one of the most celebrated and prolific authors in East Germany, however, due to the politics of her time she has not been recognized to a large extent outside of the German-speaking world. Few of her writings have been translated, and those translations that do exist have only recently become available. A notable reason for this may be her political convictions; she was one of many East German writers who remained staunch advocates of Marxist principles, although often at odds with the regime of the GDR.¹ As one of the most privileged authors in the GDR, Morgner was allowed to publish and travel extensively in the West, and even held a position as a visiting professor at the University of Zurich from 1987-1988.² In 1977 she was awarded the National Prize for Literature, celebrating her talent and accomplishments.

Morgner's novels deal extensively with feminist issues, especially her prominent works *Leben und Abenteuer der Trobadora Beatriz nach Zeugnissen ihrer Spielfrau Laura*,* published in 1974 and *Amanda. Ein Hexenroman*, published in 1983. These novels are the first two in a planned trilogy, which explores the theme of women within the GDR and the world at large, while stylistically utilizing myth and magic.

* Published in English as *The Life and Adventures of Trobadora Beatrice as Chronicled by Her Minstrel Laura*. Translated by Jeanette Clausen. Nebraska, 2000.

The plot of *Leben und Abenteuer der Trobadora Beatriz* is complicated and fantastical. It begins with Laura Salman, one of the protagonists, presenting Morgner herself with a manuscript that details the life of Beatriz de Dia. Beatriz is a female troubadour from the 12th century who has slept for 810 years in exchange for the promise to work in a matriarchal society when she awakes. Beatriz is unfortunately awoken two years early by a highway construction crew, and soon begins travelling. She first goes to Paris, but as women there are not yet emancipated she travels to the GDR, which she has heard called “the promised land” by the journalist Uwe Parnitzke. She hopes to pursue her career as a female troubadour in the GDR, however there too patriarchy still reigns. She meets Parnitzke’s ex-wife Laura, who hires Beatriz as her minstrel, and the two begin to cooperate on their literary works. Laura takes up the practice of alchemy and sends Beatriz to tour southern Europe on a quest for the elusive unicorn, as mixing its horn into the drinking water would enchant it so as to make people love one another. The novel ends dramatically, as Beatriz falls to her death while washing windows.

The sequel *Amanda. Ein Hexenroman* opens with Beatriz coming back to life as a siren in the shape of an owl with a woman’s head. As she has lost her voice and tongue, she lives in the Berlin Zoo and concentrates on writing her life into the story of Laura Salman. She adds to this story using information given to her by Isabel, the leader of a group of witches in Hørselberg. Isabel is working to fight the patriarchal system, ultimately hoping to destroy men and establish a matriarchy. Another group of witches, led by Amanda, hope to free men and women and “reunite each person with the part of herself or himself that had to be suppressed.”³ In Morgner’s version

of the GDR people are comprised of two halves, one of which conforms to society and one of which is more creative and imaginative. As a student, Laura is living with her boyfriend Konrad Tenner, yet she is not prepared to marry or start a family. Therefore the Chief- Devil Kolbruk cuts off the creative half of Laura, in an attempt to force her to become a willing homemaker and worker. Amanda is the side of Laura that Kolbruk detached, and she begins living with the witches and working to find her way back to Laura.

Once Laura is split in half, Tenner loses interest in her and the two separate. Later in the story Tenner marries Vilma, who Laura then hires to help find an elixir to serve as a substitute for sleep. Laura does not know how to manage work, her personal interests, and caring for her son, Wesselin, in the hours of the day when she is awake. Tenner is jealous of the relationship between Vilma and Laura, as he suspects that the two women spend their time together seeking out other men.

The novel ends as it is revealed that Tenner is a ghostwriter for the patriarchy, represented by the Chief-Angel Zacharias and the Chief-Devil Kolbruk, both of whom are trying to win Laura's favor. Tenner's opposite in the novel is Heinrich Fakal, as Fakal is someone who knows about his two halves and is hoping to help Laura steal a potion that can reunify people. Fakal is eventually betrayed by Tenner, and in the last chapter the witches are driven out of Berlin.

Morgner died before she could complete the third book in this trilogy, yet the fragments she had written were published in 1998 under the title *Das heroische*

Testament.^{*} This novel utilizes similar stylistic devices to the first two, namely shifting narration, fragmentary chapters, and the inclusion of magical elements.

The structure of these three novels is intricate and complex. *Leben und Abenteuer der Trobadora Beatriz* is divided into thirteen books and 139 chapters that follow the main story. Dividing these sections are seven intermezzos, comprised of material from Morgner's previous novel, *Rumba auf einen Herbst*,[†] and which present facets of the characters' lives from a decade or so earlier.⁴ The structure of the chapters ranges from "utterly fantastical fiction to verbatim records to imagined interviews and articles from well-known publications,"⁵ and voices and point-of-view shift throughout the novel.

The aspect of the magical, and the playfulness with which Morgner writes, is in stark contrast to the communist principles underlying the society of the GDR. With the founding of the GDR strict guidelines were established that defined what could be depicted in literary works. The German Socialist Unity Party (SED) demanded that the arts follow the guidelines of "socialist realism," a "set of artistic guidelines adopted from the Soviet Union and incorporated into the political program of the SED."⁶ Rather than following these guidelines and portraying economics and material goods as the determining factors of society, Morgner depicts the power of magic and fantasy. Thus Morgner transgresses the bounds of her society, even while setting the majority of her book within it. In this way she is able to critique her current society and promote ideas of change without appearing to criticize the regime under which she is writing.

^{*} The title in English would be *The Heroic Testament*.

[†] The title in English would be *Rumba for an Autumn*.

The magical elements in Morgner's world create an alternative society, although that society remains very similar to Morgner's own. As Helen Bridge explains in her essay "Myth and History in Irmtraud Morgner's *Amanda*," the novel suggests that,

Since the destructive course of history hitherto has resulted from the excessive value attached to principles defined by the developed world as masculine, those principles regarded as feminine and traditionally confined to the private sphere must be brought into the public realm and allowed to complement masculine values in determining the future course of history.⁷

Thus, the fantastic elements of Morgner's world specifically criticize the patriarchal structure of her society, necessitating discussion of gender and gender within society. After all, it is this very patriarchal structure that disappoints Beatriz de Dia upon her arrival in the supposedly gender-equal society of the GDR.

Morgner not only adds magic to her novels, but she also adds elements of herself to the plot. By identifying her role as author at the beginning of the first book, and by quoting her previous novel within this later one, Morgner places herself directly within the narrative. Thus it is important to examine her opinions and beliefs as an author along with her written works. *Die Hexe im Landhaus* provides us with a transcript of Morgner reading three selected chapters, two from *Amanda* and one from the never-finished third book of the trilogy. *Die Hexe im Landhaus* also contains an interview in which she discusses these works, and much of her philosophy regarding gender. As *Amanda* is nearly 700 pages long, an examination of these selected chapters will provide examples of many important themes, while remaining within the scope of this thesis.

The first two chapters that Morgner reads are the 79th and 80th chapters of *Amanda*.^{*} The first is called “The Marriage Swindler, or Why Must Barbara Wait for her Trial?”[†] It transcribes writings given to Laura by a Huguenot witch, Barbara, and describes Barbara’s journey from a traditional childhood to a life of witchcraft. The second chapter is called “Lentil Soup in the Bärenschänke,”⁹ a bar on Friedrich Street in Berlin. Here, Laura meets with Konrad Tenner, and even though they have separated, Tenner uses this meeting as a chance to “spill out his heart.”¹⁰ The third chapter, called “Necromancy in the Marx-Engels-Auditorium,”¹¹ comes from the final novel of the trilogy, which was never completed. It reads like a newspaper report, and describes a scene in which a professor prepares to give a lecture at the Marx-Engels-Auditorium in Berlin, and finds himself instead speaking of the importance of witchcraft to modern life. These chapters explore the major themes discussed in this thesis: gender relations, sexuality, the power of speech, isolation, and economic independence.

The two chapters that Morgner reads from *Amanda* best explore the theme of gender relations. The characters live in a society with clearly defined gender roles, and in both chapters they attempt to escape these roles, or at least express dissatisfaction with them. The first chapter opens with, “My mother was a woman as they appear in books: competent in all roles. My father played no roles: he lived... He had his wife to thank for that.”¹² Morgner immediately presents a society in which women are expected to do everything, including taking care of the men. The narrator,

^{*} This chapter numbering corresponds to the West German edition: Irmtraud Morgner, *Amanda. Ein Hexenroman*, (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 1983). The original East German edition is numbered differently.

[†] All translations of Morgner’s work are my own. For the original German text see the endnotes. Quotations from all texts will be provided in German in the endnotes.

Barbara, moves from East Germany to Hamburg in the West, with high hopes of equality. However here she feels alone and out of place, leading her to marry a man, Arwed. A rift quickly forms between the couple, as Barbara describes how Arwed, “was jealous of me for my carefree life, and eventually I found each of his working days to be a silent reproach.”¹³ By describing her life as “carefree,” Barbara makes it clear that her husband has no idea of the amount of work she does in tending to their two children, the household, and him. Arwed eventually divorces her and marries a wealthier woman, because this allows him “...three or four hours of free time each day. He use[s] them to study archaeology.”¹⁴ While Arwed feels Barbara’s busy life is “carefree,” he uses his own spare time to pursue an interest as frivolous as archaeology. Their relationship illustrates the lack of understanding between men and women in German society at that time, and how gender roles are often dictated by tradition, leaving women in charge of the household and men in charge of building a career. This dynamic undermines the work of the woman, and leads to resentment on both sides.

Once the two divorce it is clear how much work Barbara must do as a single mother, as she has the double burden of working and taking care of her family. She states,

Because I had no helpful relatives or friends and could not find a place for the children in an all-day school, I had to work at night. Occasional work as a cleaning woman, a barmaid, a babysitter. I could not be picky. I had never learned a profession. Although I could sleep neither day nor night if I wanted to adequately fulfill my commitments to my children, I surrendered to failure after a few weeks. Thus, while I slept, the children made noise in the stairway, poured water out of the window, and played in front of the door in stockings...Most lodgers ignored this because they knew that I was a divorced woman.¹⁵

Barbara is under such pressure because she must support her children, take care of them, and maintain her own personal health, that eventually the children are taken from her and given to her husband, as the judge who oversaw their divorce does not feel that she can adequately care for them. This upsets her to the point that she has thoughts of murdering the divorce court judge and possibly of committing suicide; instead, after the third visit with her children, she flees across the border and returns to East Germany, where she seeks political asylum.

In East Germany Barbara goes to see an old school friend Irene, because she has heard that Irene has married an important man and will be able to help her. When she reaches Berlin, however, Barbara discovers that Irene is divorced, yet she takes Barbara in, in an act of women caring for and helping each other. They end up living together in cramped quarters, and Barbara finds work in a light bulb factory. She describes this time as a “three shift operation,”¹⁶ as she and Irene need to balance their schedules so that Irene’s son Thomas sees one of them each day, as he is in danger of repeating a grade.¹⁷ Their life continues this way for a while, until Barbara begins socializing with her co-workers.

One day on a picnic, her co-workers dare her to place a marriage advertisement in the newspaper, as they believe that she needs a husband to help her with the many demands in her life. While Barbara does not want to marry again, she does want to prove to her co-workers that she is not scared of marriage, so she places an advertisement that reads: “Small woman...inconspicuous beauty, attentive, shy, would like to admire and pamper a man as an attentive and industrious housewife, affectionate in bed, and an all-forgiving mother...”¹⁸ Although no one had responded

to this ad when previously placed by her friend in West Germany, when Barbara places it in the East German “Wochenpost” she receives 119 responses. The ad portrays a woman who represents traditionally feminine virtues of the kind valued within a patriarchal system. That an advertisement for a woman with these characteristics garners so many responses shows how simply eliminating inequality before the law does not overturn traditional gender expectations, as East German society proudly proclaimed equal rights for women. The men who respond to Barbara’s ad desire traditional values in an “ideal woman,” something that Barbara capitalizes upon by beginning a new career as a “marriage swindler.”

For Barbara, this career entails finding a man looking for this ideal wife and pretending to be that woman for a period of time, before running away with some of his money. She chooses a man who merely wants comfort and companionship as her first client, yet once he begins to desire a more traditional arrangement, namely marriage, Barbara takes some of his money as her salary and leaves. She describes how someone in her line of work must be

...in spotless physical condition. Blue spots, bite or scratch marks and such also leave open the past... For the ideal wife that I presented, as little past life as possible was expected. I was most successful when I presented myself as someone who kept house after my mother’s death, and had been so strictly watched by my father that I was not even allowed to go dancing, not to mention other entertainments. The more tyrannical the picture of this imaginary father, the more sympathy for him and for me.¹⁹

Thus, the ideal woman to marry is one who has no romantic past, one who has been kept innocent and desires now to break out of that innocence. This image is not only unrealistic, but also demeaning; it presents the woman as helpless and accustomed to being dominated by male influences in her life. Yet this is the most useful in

Barbara's career as a marriage swindler. She describes how the men who respond to her advertisement are "...excitable," as "just the word 'emancipation' [is] enough to make them angry."²⁰ These men are all divorced, and all expect submission from their wives, hence their anger over the prospect of an "emancipated" woman.

The second man that Barbara takes on as her client works in a high-pressure job, and she describes how,

...he needed a woman as a vent. His wife had underestimated the importance of her function as a vent for his need to be able to do his work, and she had divorced him. I knew my function immediately and I gathered my strength. When the bursts of anger were too much for my strength, I let off steam in the kitchen where there was always a chair available to hack into pieces...²¹

These descriptions of a powerful man seeking a submissive wife demonstrate prevalent gender expectations in her society. The man should be dominant and aggressive, while the woman should be submissive to his desires and needs. Once the woman rebels and becomes "emancipated," these men grow even angrier and most likely more violent.

The second chapter that Morgner reads, in which Laura and Konrad Tenner meet for lunch, displays similar gender expectations. Through Tenner's thoughts, Morgner describes how "tradition forbade a man to truly confide in another. Convention required that a true man settle everything alone. This unwritten law also applied to the many praised and celebrated male friendships. Even today, he who broke it would be dishonorable."²² However, with this expectation of silence and keeping to oneself comes the simultaneous expectation of male comradeship. Women "envy the gregariousness of their men around the table," and have "no idea that it is all a lie. Even close friends lie to each other like crazy."²³ Therefore, the GDR society

that Morgner creates in her novel is one in which men have relationships that appear intimate on the surface but are isolated in reality. Women, however, have enough camaraderie that they are “easily allowed to admit to each other that they were poor devils,”²⁴ meaning that they ultimately have a deeper connection than the men they so envy. Yet because the women are not aware that their connection is more meaningful, the women too feel isolated.

This division between the genders is reflected in what society values. As Tenner describes,

Only quantities were valid here and there as realities. Qualities - for example all varieties of feelings - were seen as frivolous because they were not measurable. This continuous replacement of “reputable” *realis* would lead to the extreme development of rationality and the lack of communication over the so-called “un-*realis*,” to the entire deficit of that which earlier had been called nobleness of heart...²⁵

This creates a distinction between rational, measurable quantities, and sensitive, “noble” qualities, a division that is mirrored in the divide between men and women. Men must be rational and measured in their behavior, silently working in their own best interest. Women, on the other hand, can talk to each other about their feelings. As emotions are seen as “frivolous” qualities, the women who express them are in stark contrast to the men that suppress them. The narrator states that, “there was no modern word for this most human of all cultivation, which today enjoys, at most, a laughable existence as the women’s sphere.”²⁶ This “nobleness of heart” that is later referred to as “sensitivity,” is a feminine value in opposition to the values of rationality and lack of communication, which the previous passages define as masculine.

Konrad Tenner and Laura act contrary to these gender expectations in their meeting. Tenner meets with Laura because he is concerned that the time she is spending with his wife Vilma has a secret purpose. Tenner worries that the two women are trying to create an aphrodisiac, and that Vilma is having an affair with help from Laura. In reality the two women are trying to brew an elixir that would allow Laura to function with less sleep. Laura remains silent throughout most of their conversation, thus behaving in the manner expected of men in her society. Tenner's fears about his wife's behavior, however, reflect an emotional concern that men are not supposed to reveal and which is associated with women. The conversation between Laura and Tenner reveals how untenable the gender expectations of their society are, and that people do not necessarily fit these expectations.

Although he is a male and expected to celebrate silence, Tenner wishes to speak to Laura about his wife, and he also reveals the power that stories and words have on him. As Tenner thinks about Laura, he compares the excitement of stories to sexual pleasure, describing them as "exotic" and "titillating."²⁷ The fact that telling stories, the creation of imaginary worlds, and the ability to break away from reality, is so enticing to Tenner demonstrates to what extent his society is a repressive one.

Tenner bemoans that,

The heroes of Homer were at least allowed to complain. The heroes of the today had to swallow their fear. "Always swallow," said Tenner puffing...In this country, where everyone who has a cold can go to a doctor and have it examined and treated for free and hemorrhoids and enlarged prostates are harmless topics of conversations – in such a land, a man, who cannot or is not allowed to keep his mental and emotional distress a secret, is ruined. And not only among the so-called simple folk. Also the so-called educated, who constantly talk about progress and science, behave as if they were from the middle ages.²⁸

Tenner's frustration with the conditions of his society shows that keeping everything inside and remaining silent is not a practical solution in the long run. This society that celebrates silence and makes story telling shameful is one that cannot last, as its members will not be able to maintain the roles they are expected to fill. An emphasis on and celebration of silence serves to prove the power that words can have: an entity seen as taboo draws more attention and interest than one openly accepted by society, and thus poses a greater threat. With speaking comes the potential for truth, and truth is what Tenner is ultimately seeking from Laura. His concerns about his wife could be alleviated if he were able to speak openly with Laura, however society's dictate of silence prevents him from doing so.

The third chapter that Morgner reads, the one from the unfinished third novel in the trilogy, focuses on the power of voice and speech. In this chapter a professor gives a lecture at Humboldt University in Berlin. The original title of his lecture is "Why added Value";²⁹ however the speech he gives instead is "Why and to Which End Does One Study Universal Magic?"³⁰ In this oration he argues for embracing and celebrating magic in our modern lives. Not only is magic the topic of his lecture, but it is magic itself that allows him to speak of the subject, as the orator giving the speech "was enchanted and spoke in tongues."³¹ Thus, magic and words are intrinsically linked.

The speaker states, "The larger the gift that I have to transfer to you – and what does a man have to give mankind that is greater than truth? – the more I have to be concerned that its worth may become less in my hands."³² Therefore, words are equated with both power and truth. Speaking the truth is thus a way to influence

others and affect society. As Tenner tells the reader earlier, because men are not allowed to speak about how they truly feel, they necessarily begin to lie. Without words and speech each individual remains isolated in his or her internal reality.

In these excerpts from Morgner's novels each character is isolated, regardless of gender. As revealed in the chapter about Barbara, men are able to rely on women for almost everything, yet women are expected to cater to their family's needs, as well as their job if they work outside of the house, causing them to feel alone in the world. As the chapter with Tenner and Laura shows, the women perceive a connection between the men, making them feel even more isolated. However, the men are isolated as well, as they are unable to confide in anyone. It is clear that they are no happier than the women with the expectations that society places on them. Barbara speaks of her father's poor conscience, which developed after years of being taken care of by her mother. Tenner is desperate to speak to Laura and discover the truth about his wife, even though society expects him to contain his emotions and lie when necessary. Thus, the common theme among humanity seems to be isolation, one which emphasizes division and prevents unity.

In the chapter with Laura and Konrad Tenner, the narration switches between calling Tenner "Konrad" and "Tenner." The chapter begins with "Tenner" and switches to "Konrad" once he grabs Laura's hand. When the narration moves to his thoughts about Laura, he is called "Tenner" again. The use of his forename creates intimacy between the character and the reader, an intimacy that is reflected in Konrad Tenner and Laura's interaction, as he is called "Konrad" as he holds her hand and "Tenner" when he is distant from her in his mind. The brevity of the period in which

he is referred to as “Konrad” implies that it is rare for two people to have such a deep connection.

Society expects silence of Morgner’s characters. By not speaking with one another, or lying to one another when they do speak, people are forced to live within their own thoughts, leading each person to create his or her subjective reality. Morgner’s shifting narrative voice emphasizes the concept that there is no objective reality. The proliferation of magic and fantasy throughout the novels further blurs the line between what is subjective and what is objective, ultimately making the reader question if an objective reality can even exist.

Economics is an important factor in the lives of these characters, as well as a powerful influence on the structure and value system of a society. Barbara is so frustrated with the relationship between men and women in her society that she decides to capitalize upon it for her own economic advantage by becoming a “marriage swindler.” She not only receives monetary gains from this practice, by taking the money she feels she is owed for her service from the man she is swindling, but she also refers to this practice as her career. She equates her previous marriage with a job, saying, “I had worked for 14 years in this job. Adaptation was my specialty, which I had learned from scratch.”³³ She tells the reader that the final sum she takes from her second partner includes “a bonus for dirty work and accidents,”³⁴ as she has withstood both physical and emotional abuse.

The society that Morgner creates is in desperate need of change, and the solution that she presents is magic. In the first chapter, Barbara goes away to Hørselberg, and learns about magic from the witches there. She then expands her

marriage swindling operation to the point where she has magically secluded many men and has them working for her in building up land she has purchased. Eventually she tires of this, as she realizes that her actions affect no real change within society. She tries to turn herself in, but the police can find no one to testify against her. The men are happily working at a cooperative nursery, and do not want to change their continuous habits. Thus, although Barbara hopes to affect society by changing the habits of the men she enchants, once the men have discovered a new life they do not want to change further. This highlights the tendency for humanity to accept the status quo and resist change; one person alone fighting for change cannot have much effect. All of humanity must desire growth so that each individual will work for it.

Because humanity tends to prefer what is comfortable, Morgner presents magic as a means to quicken change within society. The main theme of the lecture “Why and to Which End Does One Study Universal Magic?” is that witchcraft is needed in modern life to effect change. The first few paragraphs of this lecture are adapted from Friedrich Schiller’s inaugural speech as a professor of history at the University of Jena in 1789, entitled “How and to What End Does One Study Universal History?” Morgner changes very little of the first part of the speech, merely replacing “history” with “magic.” The theme of Schiller’s lecture is that without the study of history there is no way to move forward and create a new future. By eliminating history within the speech, Morgner makes the point that we have no future unless we drastically change our course of action. By advocating for witchcraft as an alternative model on which to base our actions, Morgner compels us to look

towards a future that is unique and unprecedented, one that does not stem from the patriarchy of the past.

The bewitched speaker says,

The domain of necromancy is seminal and comprehensive; today, in its circle lies the entire moral world. It leads mankind through all situations that man experiences, through all the changing forms of opinion, through foolishness and sagacity, exaggeration and refinement. There is no one at all to whom necromancy does not have something important to say...For all share a designation with each other in different ways, the one which brought you to the world – to build ourselves as mankind. This is impossible without necromancy.³⁵

Thus we need magic if we wish to change our world, and because the ultimate goal of mankind is self-improvement, magic is important to the life of each and every person.

The orator continues, telling the audience that magic is necessary to achieve change at an adequate pace.

Our hope lies in leaving behind the traditional human culture and custom to resolve conflicts through war, and in making war taboo. Immediately. Not the day after tomorrow; today. A saying asserts that: “speed is not sorcery.” This doesn’t apply to our current global situation...immediacy is a new way of handling the world, which breaks with this familiar tradition. But normally traditions grow, they need time to become effective.³⁶

Changing tradition is a slow process, so mankind needs magic to speed its development. The most important tradition to change is that which leads to war and violence. As the speaker states,

The recognition that a world war, which today can only be an atomic war, would have no victor, that there would be only losers, demands that under the enormous pressure of time we wake up in support against resignation to the oversized challenge of remembering the positive tradition of heretics... those who were liberally condemned in their time and later seen as greatly promising. Because they thought of the possibilities of the day after tomorrow, and proceeded accordingly. These possibilities of the day after tomorrow, which we need today.³⁷

Because Morgner is writing during the Cold War, the threat of an atomic war is not a distant one. Morgner's statement reflects the sentiment that we need a drastically new approach to our world if we wish to survive, and looks towards those who have been labeled heretics and isolated outside of general society. She states, "The female heretic is called a witch,"³⁸ meaning that women might offer the solution for drastic change. As society has suppressed traditionally feminine virtues, what Tenner describes as "qualities," humanity has come closer to total destruction. Perhaps now is the time to embrace these values. Following the orator's statement that female heretics are called witches, the narrator asks the important question "Are there witches today?"³⁹ If these heretics, these witches, do still exist, it is vital to utilize their ideas. As the speaker states, "The experience of everyday magic in our land and others must be used immediately for universal politics."⁴⁰

In utilizing the knowledge of heretics, and especially women, society would break from the ways of the male-dominated past. The contemporary situation is the result of male leadership, and thus a prominent theme of Morgner's trilogy is the power held by communities of women, specifically communities of witches. As Morgner describes before reading from her books,

...unfortunately the historical point has been reached, in which the flaw of the rulers could destroy not only their existence, but also with them the existence of those they rule, and of all that crawls and flies on the earth and earth itself...Because politics excludes experiments, has to exclude them, -- after unsuccessful attempts in politics, one cannot begin as one did before, -- the female experience, which is no longer expendable for world history, can only be brought quickly and experimentally into a useful form on the Brocken.^{*41}

* The Brocken, or Blocksberg, is the highest peak in Northern Germany. It has traditionally been connected with magic and witchcraft, and is also the setting for the scene in Goethe's *Faust I* that depicts the magical events of Walpurgisnacht.

Therefore it is those who learn from witches - and thus women - who are able to affect change. Morgner describes how one faction of West German witches “think about very practical subject matters and complain about difficulties less, but they confront them...and battle them in a particular way, with optimistic solutions, even magical ones.”⁴² These witches also “organize turbulent campaigns, which they call magical campaigns. They debate politically, broadly speaking, meeting in secrecy...”⁴³ If humankind learned from these behaviors it could overturn male-created society and form a new one, one which hopefully would be able to overcome current gender inequalities.

An important aspect of contemporary gender inequality is the expectation that women do all of the housework and care for the children. Although they are able to work as men do, they have not been relieved of the responsibility of the household, effectively forcing them to work in two shifts. The orator states,

...emancipated women must perform a second shift after their job (an honorary duty), and emancipated men can more or less withdraw from this duty (a trivial offence), or if women in other countries are entirely bound to the household and the raising of children, it is in no way only a problem of women, but rather a fashion that was allowed a little yesterday and today is outdated. It is a problem for humanity.⁴⁴

Thus this issue not only affects women, but every person as a member of humankind. In the interview that follows her reading, Morgner cites a statistic claiming that 80% of the household work is performed by women and 11% by men. The remaining 9% is done by others, whom Morgner guesses are most likely grandmothers, and therefore still women. She advocates for the work of women, saying,

One must think of what Karl Marx said, that the true wealth of mankind is leisure time. In this relationship the woman pales. This is very notable. On the other hand I believe that not only the work that happens in a company is

meaningful work for the community. The other work that is carried out so that man can live, so that he can have a roof over his head, gets attention so he does not freeze – freeze physically and actually -, this is equally meaningful work for the community, creative work, and possibly more difficult than working for a large business. It is the same intense burden, whether one leads a household or a state.⁴⁵

By referring to Marx in her analysis, Morgner suggests that her current society does not live up to its socialist ideas in regard to gender relations. As a committed Marxist living in the GDR, this was a powerful statement for Morgner to make. By equating work done outside the home to that done within it, Morgner advocates not only for recognition of the work that women do, but also for the importance that household work holds within a community and for society. Therefore the problem that women face of a double-shift is not amenable to members of either gender; it removes men from their children and from the important work of promoting community as much as it prevents women from embracing their individuality and engaging in work outside the home. Men, too, desire gender equality, as demonstrated in many aspects of the chapters Morgner reads.

Barbara, the mother turned marriage swindler and witch, turns herself in to the police at the end of the chapter for having taken in men and essentially enslaved them through her marriage swindling. However, in the end the men refuse to testify against her, and the officer who goes to investigate tells her that “a gardener’s production cooperative stood at the given location, whose members knew nothing of [her] reported behavior.”⁴⁶ Thus that the men are not unhappy with the new roles they had been assigned. As Barbara describes the community she has created through her swindling, she says,

I now found to my joy that a sort of psychological stability had been more or less maintained, which I had built as a marriage swindler through admiration, subjugation, overprotective motherly love, selflessness, and similar nostalgic female virtues. The clients themselves did not call these female virtues of entrapment “nostalgic,” but rather “old-fashioned” and “reactionary.” I was the unofficial place in their life where they could relax from their ideological and moral exertion. Many men quickly grew healthy as soon as they lost their bad conscience.⁴⁷

The men in her society wish for an escape from “ideological and moral exertion.” Her description of the men losing their “bad consciences” mirrors her later reflection on her parents’ roles, when she says that her father “had not enjoyed the services my mother performed or hadn’t really been able to use them, as he had a bad conscience allowing my mother to serve him.”⁴⁸ Therefore, what Morgner proposes in her interview is reflected in her fiction: men wish to change gender expectations as much as women do.

In the chapter that portrays Tenner and Laura, the two are breaking down gender roles because these roles are impossible for them to fulfill. Tenner needs to express his worries about his wife’s behavior, yet men are expected to contain their emotions and remain silent. In their interaction, Laura is the quiet one and Tenner is the one speaking. This reverses the roles prescribed by society, in which a man is expected to be silent and in control, while women are seen as frivolous and emotional.

In the third chapter the narrator is a man who suddenly speaks with the voice of a witch, bringing a female voice to a larger audience and blurring the lines between the two genders. This emphasis on male and female as flexible categories, and the depictions of members of both genders with behaviors and characteristics supposedly limited to the other gender, show that the fate of humankind is linked to the fate of

both men and women. Morgner states later in response to the question “Is the coming future of mankind always towards equality?”

As important as the emancipation of woman is the emancipation of man, and sometimes I think that’s even more important. In our tradition man was always the sex that had the upper hand. In these times the emancipation of man is especially important. Moreover, if we had two earths we could say that we would bear it with joy...on two earths. But we have only this one. The two halves of mankind have to get along.⁴⁹

The emancipation of humanity is dependent upon the emancipation of both women and men from the roles within which they are trapped. As Morgner says, “A true close relationship to children is not only work, not only a burden, but also a gain that brings character to humankind. Men do not simply lose their privilege, but they also gain a world, a piece of freedom.”⁵⁰ Therefore men should not look at emancipation as something that will force them to give up the freedom that they have enjoyed for centuries, but rather as something that will bring them a new, important experience.

This idea of men and women truly being equal relates to the idea of *Selbstbehauptung* that Morgner discusses in *Die Hexe im Landhaus*. *Selbstbehauptung* translates as self-assertion or competitiveness, and Morgner uses it to describe how each individual must work on improving him- or herself so that all become emancipated. She describes how “equality” is a difficult word in the discussion of gender relations, stating sardonically,

Equality, what does that mean? One has the same rights. One has the same right to work. It means I have double the obligations. Equality says nothing about obligation. Equality means that one has the same rights as a man but one has twice as many obligations as a woman...⁵¹

By emphasizing once again the double shift that women face, Morgner proposes *Selbstbehauptung* as a way to reach the goal of “equality.” She describes how, “The production of a new quality cannot be the work of a few people. The question is directed towards each individual.”⁵² In her role as an author, Morgner is able to “encourage and seek to assist each individual, so that he or she does not let the creative powers in his or herself die...”⁵³ This is because

A writer is truly an advocate of the individual, and naturally must assert himself or herself in the world above all. But each other individual must also assert himself or herself...self-assertion is a hard business in these times...for this reason it is extremely important that people meet occasionally and seek to assert themselves and encourage others to do the same.⁵⁴

It is the duty of each person as an individual to stand up for him- or herself and to fight for equality in a true sense, one which does not ignore obligation. As Morgner later states, “For me it is a matter of life and death that the concerned woman take the issues into her own hands and fight for them or provide a way to hear them, not to wait – they will not be handled for her. Free yourself, do something! We must all do this for ourselves.”⁵⁵ These words capture the spirit with which Morgner imbued her works. The excerpts that she reads in *Die Hexe im Landhaus* represent Morgner’s view of her society, giving insight into gender relations within the GDR and providing the reader with inspiration for improving these relations and expectations. As society is created by man, mankind has the power to change it. The degree to which Morgner emphasizes the plight of the individual over the plight of women is unique compared to the other works examined in this thesis. Although Wolf, Fassbinder, and Böll all touch on this theme, the explicitness with which Morgner discusses it sets her apart.

Chapter Two: Christa Wolf's *Kassandra*

Similar to Irmtraud Morgner's mythical novels is Christa Wolf's novel *Kassandra*. *Kassandra* depicts the story of the Trojan War in a unique way, narrating it from a woman's point of view. Inspired by Aeschylus's play "Cassandra," Wolf places her protagonist Kassandra in the same position she is in his play: about to face her death as a prisoner of Agamemnon after the fall of her city Troy. However, unlike the play, the novel does not focus on Kassandra's present fate, but rather uses first person narration, comprised of flashbacks of her earlier life to depict the crumbling of a society due to war and Kassandra's consequent discovery of what life within her society is truly like.

When war comes to Troy, Kassandra's life is turned upside down. The way that her society begins to treat women reveals aspects of it that Kassandra was blind to until then, forcing her to flee from the identity and society under which she has grown up, and seek out a new reality and identity. In the end, she is fated to fall with her society, hence her situation as she narrates her tale standing at the entrance to Agamemnon's palace, knowing she is about to die. As a seer, she recognizes and acknowledges her fate, and this knowledge and preparation makes her a self-conscious narrator; this contrasts with the position of the protagonists in Morgner, Fassbinder, and Böll's works. As seen in the chapters from *Die Hexe im Landhaus*, Morgner's characters are firmly within their society, unaware that they will not be able to affect change within it. As we will see, *Bremer Freiheit* and *Billiard um Halbzehn* also depict characters interacting with their societies without knowledge of

what effects their actions will have. In narrating her story, however, *Kassandra* is faced with the knowledge that her society has crumbled; her isolation is unalterable and soon to be made permanent through her death.

Wolf sets *Kassandra* in Troy, distancing the novel published in East Germany in 1983 from her current time and own society. This enables Wolf to comment more freely on both. While Wolf, like Morgner, expanded upon the guidelines of socialist realism in many ways throughout the course of her career, the idea that artistic works were not supposed to criticize the communist lifestyle remained in public and political consciousness. Thus distancing her novel from her society gave Wolf greater freedom for commentary upon it.

For Wolf, a work of literature is a reflection on its author, and incorporates personal experiences and opinions.¹ Wolf herself states that it is “language, it is literature, that really tells us about human society.”² Thus *Kassandra* cannot be separated from Wolf herself and her experiences living in the GDR, as well as her beliefs and opinions as a strong supporter of socialism. The crumbling of Troy can be read as an allegory for the potential crumbling of the GDR if it fails to solve the problems Wolf sees within its society. By setting the novel not only in Troy, but also at a time of war, Wolf portrays a society at its most fragile moments. In this case war makes the two sides, Greece and Troy, grow to be like each other until there is very little distinction between the two. This can be seen as a comment on events contemporary to Wolf’s time, as she was writing during the Cold War. Wolf portrays that the conditions and processes of war as an intrinsic factor in the history of humanity.

The setting of the novel not only allows Wolf to examine the fate of her society by disguising it in another, but also to reflect upon what might occur in a world comprised of and lead by women. In the novel, Cassandra discovers an alternate community, comprised mostly of women, all of whom worship the ancient moon goddess Cybele. Cybele, also known as the Mother of the Gods, was an Asiatic deity long established in Syria and Asia Minor.³ She was celebrated for her capacity as mother and nurturer,⁴ and was a symbol of a counter-culture to the Greek gods and goddesses worshipped by most of Troy; Cybele represents something more ancient and universal, just as this alternate community of Cybele-worshipping women desires something very different from the male-dominated Troy. Wolf's portrayal of this community suggests that women in Wolf's own time might want something different from the male-dominated history that has brought them to the brink of atomic warfare.

The setting of Troy allows Wolf to remove Christianity from her discussion, portraying instead a society in which religion is part of the state, and is a political tool rather than a spiritual one. This religion is tied to the idea that men are fated to the will of the gods, just as Cassandra is fated in many ways. She is a prophetess, able to see the inevitable fate of her country and kinsman. She herself is fated for a life of isolation and to die alone, unable to create a new society or enact change. A key theme in the other works discussed in this thesis is whether man can change society; for Cassandra this possibility has already been proved unattainable. As she says at the opening of the novel, "Here I end my days, helpless, and nothing, nothing I could

have done or not done, willed or thought, could have led me to a different goal... Vain our attempt to evade their atrocities, long have I known that.”⁵

Utilizing both the first-person narration and the setting of the novel, Wolf depicts a society through which she can comment on the primary themes examined in this thesis: sexuality and gender relations, dependence vs. independence, isolation, subjective vs. objective reality, and silence and voice. The first two of these, sexuality and gender relations, are in many ways interconnected, as well as being connected to the religious system of Troy. Cassandra’s loss of virginity comes as a rite of passage when she becomes a priestess. All the new priestesses lie down and wait blindly to be chosen by older men, from whom they will gain sexual experience. Aeneas chooses Cassandra from this group of young priestesses, an experience which Cassandra describes in great detail and with a conflicted tone. Cassandra describes her humiliation upon her mother thanking Aeneas for everything going all well,⁶ emphasizing how public knowledge of one’s first sexual experience separates the act of intercourse from any sort of love or emotion. It is clear from early in the novel that sexuality in Trojan society differs from the modern notion of sex as a private and personal act. However, although Aeneas tells Hecuba that everything has gone well, he and Cassandra have not physically completed the act of intercourse. Cassandra describes this, saying, “The sudden intervention of love can obstruct these duties.”⁷ Here Cassandra first makes clear the distinction between sex and love that exists within Trojan society, or at least for her.

Panthous, the Greek man who works at the temple of Apollo where Cassandra is a priestess, is the one who takes up a sexual relationship with Cassandra in the

place of Aeneas. She describes how Panthous “taught [her] the art of receiving a man,” yet tells that during the act she thought only of Aeneas. Afterwards “I was at a loss as to how I could harbor hatred and gratitude toward one and the same man.”⁸ Cassandra’s feeling of gratitude after losing her virginity expresses the necessity of sexual behavior in integration into her society, yet her feeling of hatred underscores the fact that she does not choose her partner for these intimate acts. Therefore Cassandra pictures the man she would have chosen to take her virginity, Aeneas, while she is having sex with another, “in order to convert [her] disgust to pleasure.”⁹ Later, Cassandra performs her own civic duty and sleeps with a younger priest, in order to pass on her experience to the inexperienced, as occurred with her own loss of virginity. In this act she dreams of Aeneas and suddenly begins “to pay heed to my body, which – who would have thought it! – obeyed the guidance of dreams.”¹⁰ Even as she grows to enjoy sex with Panthous she insists to herself that it is “Aeneas – no one but Aeneas. Of course.”¹¹ She enjoys sex only while thinking of the one she truly loves, rather than the one she is sleeping with. Thus her actions and emotions are not linked, as the act of sex is separated from the feeling of love. Not only does Cassandra picture Aeneas while having sex with Panthous, but she rebukes the use of the term “lovmaking” for her act with others, saying, “...I ought not to use the name for the acts he performed on me, they had nothing to do with love.”¹² Forcing sexuality into Troy’s public sphere, by connecting it to public, societal expectations and traditions, necessitates a separation between love and sex.

This division seems not to exist for the Greeks. Instead, love and sex are linked on a fundamental level, to the point that a dominating and non-loving sexual

act is often described as love. Breseis tells Cassandra that Diomedes, to whom she has just been given in marriage, loves her. Yet Cassandra describes how she, “saw him place his hand on her the way men touch slave women. The Greek men all around us laughed their booming male laughs. I was seized by a ghastly fear of the love of the Greeks.”¹³ The lack of respect Diomedes displays by touching Breseis like a slave woman shows how love is physical rather than emotional for the Greeks. The denotation of “male” laughter is one example of Cassandra’s tendency to gender the Greeks in her descriptions. In reference to Achilles and her sister Polyxena, Cassandra describes how she “saw that he loved her,” yet, “Achilles devoured her with his hideous glances...”¹⁴ The verb “devour” once again calls to mind a physical aspect to love that is opposite of Cassandra’s almost spiritual love for Aeneas. The emphasis on the physical aspect of love within Greek society associates it with the physical strength of masculinity.

The epitome of this over-sexed and physically violent man is Achilles, and yet he is the hero of the Greeks. This presents a dichotomy not only between the Trojans and the Greeks, but also between men and women in regard to sexuality and love. At one point Achilles goes so far as to physically desecrate the woman he has just killed, causing Cassandra to cry,

We felt it, all of us women. What will become of us if that spreads? The men, weak, whipped up into victors, need us as victims in order not to stop feeling altogether. Where is that leading? Even the Greeks felt that Achilles had gone too far. So they went further in order to punish him: Had horses drag the dead woman across the field – he wept for her now – and threw her into the river. Flay the woman in order to strike at the man.¹⁵

This illustrates Troy’s transition as it begins to become more and more like Greek society; it emphasizes a sharp divide between the men and the women, where the

women are increasingly treated as mere objects to be used in the powerful games of the men in charge.

This transition begins with war, and coincides with the rise of Eumelos, one of King Priam's officers and a leading proponent of war against Greece. Eumelos leads a group of young men who quickly reveal the weaknesses in gender relations within Trojan society by raising men above women as they never have been before. They even go so far as to bar Queen Hecuba from taking part in sessions of the council.

None of the men had looked at her when they walked past her into the council. 'Not even my son Hector,' Hecuba said bitterly. 'I stepped into his way. Eyed him from top to toe – well, you both know how I can look. "Try to understand, Mother," he said. "We want to spare you. The things we have to talk about in our council, now in wartime, are no longer the concern of women."'16

With war comes a division between the genders, defining men as rational and strong and women as weak and in need of protection. Cassandra describes how, "...all of a sudden it was no longer advisable for us women to be out alone. If you saw it properly – only no one ventured to do that – the men of both sides seemed to have joined forces against our women."17 Through war the Trojans and Greeks grow more similar to each other at the expense of the women in society. The men appear to see women as incompetent, and begin to use them as objects, just as women are viewed and used in the Greek camp. King Priam marries Cassandra to Eurypylos in exchange for support from his army, an event that Cassandra describes as "unprecedented. Never in Troy had the daughter of a free man been forced into marriage."18 Later Hector declares that he will turn over his sister Polyxena if Achilles will reveal the layout of the Greek camp. Once again, Cassandra describes how, "Never before had Troy demanded of an adversary that he betray his own

people. Never had it sold one of its daughters to the enemy at such a price.” And it is Polyxena’s own lover who agrees immediately and “sprightly” to Achilles’s demand to see her one more time, even as Hector hesitates.¹⁹ After Achilles kills Hector, he refuses to return the body unless Polyxena is given in return. Cassandra’s comment in this case is, “Until now we did not know that dead people were worth their weight in gold. Then we learned another new thing: You could exchange a living woman for a dead man.”²⁰ As a corpse loses its vitality and becomes a mere object, by exchanging it for a living woman Achilles robs Penthesilea of her human qualities, presenting her as a mere object as well. It is then decided that Polyxena will act as bait for Achilles, drawing him into a temple so that the Trojans can kill him. Christa Wolf comments upon this aspect of her story, telling the reader in “Conditions of a Narrative: Cassandra” that, “Cassandra is one of the first women figures handed down to us whose fate prefigures what was to be the fate of women for three thousand years: to be turned into an object.”²¹ On the topic of objectification she asks, “Isn’t that the principal source of violence? The fetishizing of vital, contradictory people and processes, within public notifications, until they have rigidified into ready-made parts and stage scenery: dead themselves, killing others.”²² This is exactly what happens in Troy, as women become objectified with the escalation of war and violence. This is part of the stark dichotomy between men and women that Wolf presents in *Kassandra*.

Only Aeneas does not fit this definition of masculinity. Cassandra often implies that he is in some ways not even a man. Early in the novel she states, “All men are self-centered children,” but follows this with “(What about Aeneas?)

Nonsense. Aeneas is an adult.)”²³ After Cassandra falls into a fit of illness she tells us, “At that time only a woman could touch me. Aeneas came, he sat beside me, he stroked the air above my head. I loved him more than my life.”²⁴ Here Aeneas is presented as something different from the typical man, if a man at all, in Cassandra’s mind and society. This is similar to Morgner’s portrayal of Konrad Tenner, as he acts in a way considered feminine in his society by revealing to Laura that he is jealous of his wife’s behavior. This will also be seen in Heinrich Fählmel’s behavior in *Billiard um Halbzehn*, as his relationship with the female protagonist Johanna is a loving and sexually compatible one that contrasts with the expectations of male dominance held by much of society.

If Aeneas represents the opposite of a typical man, Achilles is its epitome. As he murders Cassandra’s brother Troilus she describes “the naked hideous male gratification” on his face,²⁵ connecting his brutality to his gender and to sexuality, and making the male sexual figure one of physical violence and force. She also repeatedly refers to Achilles as “Achilles the brute,” thereby dehumanizing him. Thus one who is male to the extreme passes out of the realm of humanity.

It is not only the male extreme that exits the realm of humanity, however. In her presentation of the Amazonian women Wolf makes it clear that any person who goes too far towards violence loses their humanity, whether male or female. Wolf presents the Amazonian women as fierce warriors, equal to the men they are fighting in every way. While watching Myrne fight, Cassandra describes how she

...rejoiced to see her, a woman, put on her weapons – she was the only one to do so – when the men of Troy brought the Greeks’ horse into the city against my objections...rejoiced, perversely again, to see her hurl herself at the first

Greek to come up out of the wooden steed around midnight. Rejoiced – yes, rejoiced! – to see her fall and die from a single blow.²⁶

The men do not know how to react to these actions.

Achilles was beside himself with amazement when he ran across Penthesilea during the battle... They say that Achilles shook himself; he must have believed he was out of his mind. A woman – greeting him with a sword! The fact that she forced him to take her seriously was her last triumph... He threw her down, wanted to take her captive; she scratched him with her dagger and forced him to kill her.”²⁷

These Amazonian women fight as brutally as Achilles; they are his match in every way. They are the female antithesis to the ultimate male, and in this role they are fighting against men as a whole as much as they are fighting against what they see as injustice. Cassandra says of Penthesilea that, “She was not merely fighting the Greeks; she was fighting all men.”²⁸ Yet in opposing Achilles these violent women almost become him. Just like Achilles, they begin to lose their humanity. As Penthesilea and Arisbe discuss the murdering ways of men, Arisbe asks, “And what about us? What if we become butchers too?” Penthesilea replies, “Then we are doing what we have to do. But we don’t enjoy it.” To this Arisbe says, “We should do what they do in order to show that we are different?” and Penthesilea answers in the affirmative. When Oenone protests that, “One can’t live that way,” Penthesilea says “Not live? You can die all right.”²⁹

Kassandra describes rumors that the Amazons “...killed their own menfolk. They were monsters with only one breast (it was said), who had burned out the other at a tender age in order to use their bows more efficiently.”³⁰ By burning out one of their breasts they de-feminize themselves, making them more like the men they fight. This mirrors the way they become as brutal as those they are fighting. This loss of

humanity can be seen in the fit of madness into which many women fall after Penthesilea is killed.

Amazons, Trojan women, nothing but women. A procession leading nowhere on earth: leading to madness...they were no longer recognizable. The companions of the corpse came to resemble human beings as little as she did. Not to speak of the howling...The women, standing in a circle, chimed in shrilly. Began to sway. Sang louder, twitched. One threw back her head, the other followed. Their bodies convulsed. One woman staggered inside the circle, began to dance beside the corpse, stamping her feet, throwing out her arms and shaking. The screeches grew deafening. The woman inside the circle lost control of herself. Her mouth was wide open and foaming. Two, three, four other women lost control of their limbs, reached the point where the pinnacle of pain is indistinguishable from the pinnacle of pleasure. I felt the rhythm transfer itself to me. As the dance began inside me, I felt a strong temptation to abandon myself now...The rhythm told me that my feet preferred to exit from time, and I was about to surrender to it completely. Let the wilderness engulf us. Let the undivided, the unmanifested, the primal cause, devour us. Dance, Cassandra, move! Yes, I am coming. Everything in me urged its way toward them.³¹

This primal, bestial behavior demonstrates that women too far to one extreme can behave as inhumanly as men in their extremity. Pentheus appears during this dance and the women attack and kill him, behavior which echoes Achilles senselessly brutal actions. In "Conditions of a Narrative" Wolf states that, "...if a masculinity mania is replaced by a femininity mania, and if women throw over the achievements of rational thought simply because men produced them, in order to substitute an idealization of prerational stages in human history" it "does not make it any easier to achieve maturity."³² The previous passage from *Kassandra* is a reflection of exactly this idea, that of an individual's responsibility to behave rationally and thoughtfully, without regard to gender. This is reminiscent of Morgner's ideas in *Die Hexe im Landhaus*, where she describes the role of the individual and *Selbstbehauptung*. Each

individual must take responsibility for him- or herself as a person, rather than relying upon gender identities and their divisive, dehumanizing aspects.

Just as this fit transports these women to an alternate reality, it is at this point that Cassandra is first brought to one of her own alternate realities. Throughout the novel, Cassandra is presented as a character seeking belonging, seeking an objective reality that she can reconcile with the subjective one that she wishes to belong to. Interestingly, it is Aeneas that must bring her to the most prominent of these alternate realities, the world of outsiders where she finds a place to survive during the war. This community is comprised mostly of women, and is led by Arisbe, the de-facto leader of the women living outside the walls of Troy that Cassandra first visits with Marpessa, and Aeneas's father Anchises. The fact that it takes being carried in Aeneas's arms for Cassandra to make it to this place of safety shows once again Aeneas's unique position in the narrative, as it is only through him that Cassandra can enter a world of women. Thus, Aeneas not only differs from the typical male in both Greek and Trojan society, but ultimately he is able to transgress the line between genders.

Kassandra first discovers that this alternate world of women exists outside of Troy by the banks of the Scamander River when Marpessa leads her there shortly after she loses her virginity. The descriptions of this world and the people within it make it clear that this is a reality far from Troy, which is all that Cassandra has experienced until now. She describes

...how we suddenly stood surrounded by young oak trees, before the sanctuary of the unknown goddess where a band of brown-skinned, slender-limbed women danced in homage. Among them I saw slave women from the palace, women from the settlements beyond the walls of the citadel, and also

Parthena the nurse, who crouched outside the cave entrance, under the willow tree whose roots dangled into the opening of the cave like the pubic hair of a woman: she seemed to be directing the train of dancers with movements of her massive body. Marpessa slid into the circle, which did not even notice my arrival – a new and actually painful experience for me. They gradually increased their tempo, intensified their rhythm, moved faster, more demandingly, more turbulently; hurled individual dancers out of the circle, among them Marpessa, my reserved Marpessa!; drove them to gestures which offended my modesty; until, beside themselves, they shook, went into howling contortions, sank into an ecstasy in which they saw things invisible to the rest of us, and finally one after another sagged and collapsed in exhaustion.³³

This description calls to mind the previous one of the frenzied dance of women, however this one lacks the violence and brutality contained in the other. Instead it seems most notable for its inclusiveness, as it contains those rejected from the city, such as the servants and the women who live in settlements outside its walls.

Preceding this description Cassandra tells the reader that, “No matter how often [she] walked that way in later years, alone and with the other women,”³⁴ she never forgot the magic of that first time. By using the phrase “the other women,” Cassandra emphasizes that this world is separate from her own, and even once she has been brought into its fold she remains somewhat outside. Although she wishes to gain access to this community, something within herself holds her back.

These women are poor, yet they find themselves with more freedom and a greater sense of community than Cassandra, a princess and priestess. Cassandra’s economic privilege is not enough to make her happy; there is much more to a fulfilling life than economic security. This reflects Wolf’s socialist ideals, and reveals why Cassandra’s quest for independence does not include economic freedom, as it does for Morgner’s protagonists or Geesche in Fassbinder’s *Bremer Freiheit*.

The passage above is also fundamentally sexual, with the description of the tree resembling a vagina and the orgasmic ending to the women's dance, suggesting that only in a realm comprised solely of women, isolated from the city walls, can this form of sexuality flourish. This is different from sexuality within the city, which is dominated by religious life and duty, rather than pleasure.

Kassandra eventually visits the hut of Arisbe, one of the leaders in this world of women. Kassandra describes,

The aromatic fragrances, the clusters of herbs along ceiling and walls, a steaming brew on the open fire in the center of the room. The flames flickered and smoked; apart from that there was darkness. Arisbe was neither friendly nor unfriendly; but I was accustomed to friendliness and still needed it. Unhesitatingly she gave me the information I asked for."³⁵

Arisbe's willingness to provide information stands in contrast to those in Troy, who continually refuse Kassandra knowledge, especially after the outbreak of war threatens the position of women within the society. There is knowledge held by this community of women, and while it is secret in that it is not public, she is able to access it when she discovers its existence. This passage functions along with the previous passage to remind the reader of the strange nature of this world of women. It shows the primal element contained in the behavior of these women, and the images of magic and enchantment that describe them. The description of Arisbe standing over her "steaming brew" with herbs hanging from the ceiling calls to mind images of witches, and echoes the chapter that Morgner reads in which the lecturer promotes the value of witchcraft and female virtues. For Morgner, witches have been relegated to the role of outcast, and with them all traditionally female knowledge and traditions.

As she gains increased knowledge of this alternative society, Cassandra loses her place in Troy. This is due both to changes within the city and Cassandra's own disenchantment with her society. Cassandra realizes eventually that she has never really been part of Troy, although she had believed that to be her community. What was her objective reality for so long, that of the world of Troy, is now destroyed, forcing Cassandra to search for a new reality that she can accept.

This transition is first illustrated in Cassandra's loss of faith. Rather than some shocking experience, "...faith ebbed away from me gradually, the way illnesses sometimes ebb away, and one day you tell yourself that you are well. The illness no longer finds any foothold in you. That is how it was with my faith."³⁶ Her father calls for her during the spring following her physical departure from Troy and her decision to live with the women by the Scamander. Cassandra tells us that no one recognizes her on the streets, and she does not fight when Priam asks her to marry someone for strategic purposes. While Cassandra would previously have stood up to her father, she appears now to have given up on Troy; rather than trying to save it as she did before, she merely obeys her father, satisfying her remaining filial loyalty. As soon as her husband is killed she returns to her ideal community where "no one mentioned [her] brief time away."³⁷ Reality in this other world is an essentially subjective one itself. Not only do its members avoid the reality of war and manage to enjoy themselves despite the horrors surrounding them, but they also ignore smaller unpleasantries, such as Cassandra's brief departure. Because this world is a temporary construct, however, it cannot function as a new objective reality in which Cassandra can place herself. She seems to know that this world cannot survive, and is

merely there until she no longer can be. Therefore, Cassandra has still not found a community to which she can belong.

With her disillusionment with Troy comes Cassandra's realization that she has always been different, even when she considered herself a member of that society. She tells the reader early in her narrative that, "...everyone always knew who I was. I was never permitted to lose myself in their midst. I wished for that too late; I did too much in my past life to make myself known."³⁸ Cassandra's image of herself was one of being "affable, modest, unassuming," and she describes her refusal to lie and her insistence on being "honest, proud, and truth-loving" as part of this image.³⁹ She isolates herself from her society because she refuses to compromise in return for inclusion within it. Although "...many were prepared to be victims, not only from the outside, but through something in themselves. Everything in me revolted against that."⁴⁰ This shows that her isolation from society comes not only from society's rejection of her, but from her own refusal to make the necessary compromises in order to become part of society.

Kassandra first seeks out the alternate world of women by the Scamander because she wants answers that she feels the palace has denied her. Yet

...they could not deny what they did not have. They did not even understand the questions to which I was seeking an answer, questions which increasingly were destroying my intimate relations with the palace, with my family. I realized this too late. The alien being who wanted to know had already eaten its way too deep inside me; I could no longer get rid of it.⁴¹

Thus, her isolation is due to an internal drive as well as aspects of her society. Not only does war cause a division between men and women within Troy, but Kassandra as an individual is already incompatible with those who surround her. She seeks

answers that her community cannot give her, not because it refuses to do so, but rather because it does not have these answers. The point where she most vehemently and publically rejects what Troy stands for is after she hears the decision that King Priam will send a ship to tear Helen from her husband Menelaus for the benefit of Paris, Priam's son and Cassandra's brother. Cassandra decries this violently and then falls into a fit of illness, which lasts for an extended period of time. This is the first example of her seeming to leave her objective reality and enter a subjective one that is all her own.

In her recovery, Cassandra describes herself as divided between the part of her eating and drinking and calling itself "I" again, and the part that had been in control in her madness, now being suppressed by the "I."⁴² Arisbe helps Cassandra out of her madness, but she makes it clear that it is up to Cassandra to free herself, that no one can save her. Cassandra must make a choice to live in an external reality, rather than retreating to her mind in order to punish those she sees as having neglected and disabused her, most particularly Hecuba, Priam, and Panthous.⁴³ Yet as she arises from this illness, as she chooses to live in a more concrete world than the one in her mind, the world of the palace and temple to which she is returning "seemed as strange and unnatural to me as if they belonged to an alien race."⁴⁴ She describes how she is not yet able to say "we" when referring to the people surrounding Anchises, those who later form her separate and ideal community during the war, yet she no longer understands what she can define as a reality where she is accepted as part of a "we."

Vacillating and fragile and amorphous was the 'we' I used, went on using as long as I possibly could. It included my father, but did it any longer include

me? Yet for me there was no Troy without King Priam my father...The 'we' that I clung to grew transparent, feeble, more and more unprepossessing, and consequently I was more and more out of touch with my 'I.' Yet other people knew perfectly well who I was, they had established my identity, to them it was clear...⁴⁵

Her inability to live in the external reality of palace life leads Cassandra to seek a new reality, one in which she feels she belongs. The new realities with which Cassandra tries to live are comprised of the community of women by the Scamander, which she now not only visits but begins to join, as well as her seeming ability to live through Aeneas. As she herself asks,

Who would believe us...if we told them that in the middle of the war we used to meet regularly outside the fortress on paths known to no one but us intimates? That we, far better informed than any other group in Troy, used to discuss the situation, confer about measures (and carry them out, too); but also to cook, eat, drink, laugh together, sing, play games, learn?⁴⁶

Later she describes how

We ourselves lived in poverty. I remember that we sang a lot. Talked a lot, evenings by the fire in Arisbe's cave, where the figure of the goddess on the wall seemed to be alive...Our good cheer was not forced, though it never lost its dark undercoat. We did not stop learning...we talked about those who would come after us. What they would be like. Whether they would still know who we were. Whether they would repair our omissions, rectify our mistakes...Our time was limited and so we could not waste it on matters of minor importance. So we concentrated on what mattered most: ourselves – playfully, as if we had all the time in the world...⁴⁷

She describes a common feeling "...without exception that we were testing something, and that it was not a question of how much time we had."⁴⁸ Thus there seems to be no way for Cassandra to escape her isolation; each of her attempts is marred by temporality. This temporality is expressed by Arisbe when she says, "This much I do know: There are gaps in time. This is one of them, here and now. We cannot let it pass without taking advantage of it." Cassandra states after this, "There

at last I had my ‘we.’”⁴⁹ Therefore, the only place Cassandra truly fits in is one that is suspended in time, destined to fall.

Her connection with Aeneas is also as much created as it is real. She chooses Aeneas as someone to live through, as “Aeneas was the reality; and faithful to reality, craving reality, I wanted to cling to it...I...was with him with every fiber of my body and soul. Am with him. Aeneas. Live. You are my reserve force, I will not give you up.”⁵⁰ When her twins are born, the children of her husband and not Aeneas, Cassandra says, “...they had many mothers. And Aeneas was their father.”⁵¹ Thus Cassandra chooses the reality in which she wants to live, but unfortunately neither of these alternate realities truly gives Cassandra the sense of community, the inclusive “we,” that she is searching for. The world of women that she attempts to join is a construction and destined to fall in time. Living through another, such as she attempts with Aeneas, fails as it must; she is physically separate from Aeneas, and thus is not guaranteed life merely because he lives. When Aeneas must take up his mantle as a hero after the fall of Troy, Cassandra is no longer able to be with him. Ultimately, she is fated for loneliness, and to die as an “I” in a foreign land.

Women as a whole is also not the group within which Cassandra finds a sense of belonging, although it comes closer than any other community. The existences of women such as the Amazonian warriors demonstrate why women are not the solution to the brutality of a male-dominated world. After Penthesilea’s death Cassandra tells the reader,

...I did not want to admit that a woman could crave death...now we had to recognize that there are no limits to the atrocities people can inflict on one another; that we are capable of rummaging through someone else’s entrails and of cracking his skull, trying to find out what causes the most pain. I say

‘we,’ and of all the ‘we’s I eventually said, this is still the one that challenges me most. It is so much easier to say ‘Achilles the brute’ than to say this ‘we.’⁵²

Once again, the idea that women can be as brutal as men calls for a moderation in humanity’s behavior. One must accept responsibility to society as an individual human, rather than a man or woman. The “we” that Cassandra refers to in the above passage can be interpreted as women, and the discovery she makes that of the fact that women can kill. However her “we” can also be interpreted as humanity as a whole. What humanity is capable of is almost unpalatable, yet it is the one “we” that not one of us can avoid. In this way, it is the only true “we” to which Cassandra ever belongs.

There is a theme running through *Kassandra*, to which Cassandra alludes when describing the activities of her exiled community on the banks of the Scamander, and to which she repeatedly returns: the idea that women act as the bearers of knowledge, of history, and of truth. Knowing that she cannot escape her fate and that Agamemnon’s wife Clytemnestra will murder her, Cassandra still clings to the hope that she could beg her, persuade her to lock her up forever and give her just what she needs to survive. Cassandra imagines saying, “...I implore you: Send me a scribe, or better yet a young slave woman with a keen memory and a powerful voice. Ordain that she may repeat to her daughter what she hears from me. That the daughter in turn may pass it on to her daughter, and so on.”⁵³ Not only are women the keepers of these powerful truths, but the ideal woman for Cassandra to tell her tale to is a young slave woman; one marginalized and economically disadvantaged within society, such as those who form the community of women outside of Troy.

This theme of women as the bearers of truth connects to a greater theme within *Kassandra*, which is that of the power of words and silence. *Kassandra* herself is a prophetess, one who by her very nature holds the power of truth within her words. Yet she is destined not to be believed, meaning that she holds almost as much power by staying silent as she does by revealing what she knows.

While *Kassandra* herself is the ideal representation of this power, it is Paris who brings it to light most obviously. Right before *Kassandra* decries the actions of Troy and falls into her illness, Paris “leap[s] to his feet, shout[s]: What? He was to keep silent? Again? Still? Demean himself? Make himself invisible if possible? ‘Oh no. Those days are past. I, Paris, did not come back in order to keep silent...’⁵⁴ After this outburst he goes on to say that he will find Helen or another woman of equivalent beauty, because that is what he has been promised. Following this occurs a silence that *Kassandra* describes as new to the palace of Troy. “Each person felt that a mark was being overstepped here which had not been violated until now. No member of our family had ever dared to speak in such a way. But I, I alone saw...”⁵⁵ *Kassandra*’s prophesy after this comes in the form of a voice, however this voice is described as having,

...forced its way out of me, through me, dismembering me as it went; and set itself free. A whistling little voice, whistling at the end of its rope...Which as it swells, grows louder and more hideous, sets all my members to wriggling and rattling and hurling about. But the voice does not care. It floats above me, free, and shrieks, shrieks, shrieks. ‘Woe,’ it shrieked. ‘Woe, woe. Do not let the ship depart!’⁵⁶

The voice has agency in this passage, expressing itself through *Kassandra*, rather than being expressed by her.

It is this outburst and Cassandra's subsequent illness that marks a pivotal moment in the book, both for Cassandra herself and for the fate of Troy. Cassandra is about to face a choice between the life she knows and one yet to be discovered; Troy is about to embark on a quest that will throw it into a decade of war and destroy its society.

The process of Troy's downfall comes not only from the external threat of the Greeks, but also from the internal actions of those in power. The power of words is inextricably tied to this process. When Troilus is killed at age 17, a prophesy that Troy could win the war only if Troilus reached twenty years old is dispelled simply by the passing of a "posthumous decree declaring Troilus to be twenty years old" and promising to punish "anyone who continue[s] to maintain that Troilus was only seventeen when Achilles slew him."⁵⁷ Cassandra tries to stand up against this injustice, demanding that the war be ended immediately "...by telling the truth about Helen. By making them offerings...By admitting to what they will demand we admit – that Paris gravely violated the right of hospitality, which is sacred to us all, when he abducted Helen." Cassandra seeks the solution in words, hoping to end the war through a confession. Yet her words themselves are powerful, and her father accuses her of speaking out against Troy and throws her out of the council.⁵⁸ Cassandra eventually comes to the conclusion that "protest begins with this silence in which more than one takes part."⁵⁹ This silence reigns through the palace. It is, as Cassandra says, "A palace of silence. Hecuba, stifling her rage, was silent. Parthena the nurse, showing her fear openly, was silent. I learned a lot by observing the various types of silence. Only much later did I learn silence myself; what a useful weapon."⁶⁰

Silence, however, is a double-edged sword. While choosing silence can be a powerful weapon, being silenced represents a loss of agency; death is the ultimate silencer. In Troy, the silencing and increasing objectification of women represents not only the death of many women, but also the death of the society itself. In *Kassandra*, women hold the power of words in their knowledge of truth and history; Kassandra herself embodies this. Just as she is faced at the end with the silence of certain death, so too is any society that silences their women, and with those women the truth and history of that society. This reflects Morgner's idea that with silence comes lies and the suppression of truth. We will see this echoed in Fassbinder's *Bremer Freiheit* and Heinrich Böll's *Billiard um Halbzehn*, as in both works the women are silenced by the expectations of society, and are unable to express the problems they see in a world that ignores the lessons of history and tradition.

Chapter Three: Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *Bremer Freiheit*

Although most well known for his film direction, Rainer Werner Fassbinder was originally a playwright, theater director, and stage actor, with an extensive body of work that includes sixteen dramas, two radio plays, and many other fragments that have since been lost.¹ His play *Bremer Freiheit* provides commentary on gender relations within West German society during the 1960s and 1970s.

The 1950s was not an especially creative time within West German theater, as it saw the performance predominantly of classics and other conservative pieces in a continuation of Nazi practices, designed to bring the theater to a middle-class audience.² In the 1960s liberal politics became more prominent within German society as a whole,³ a trend reflected in the theater world of the time. Smaller, independent theater groups, such as the *antiteater* that Fassbinder helped create, formed as a reaction to the state-run productions, laying the ground for the development of new dramatic forms.⁴ One of the other founders of the *antiteater*, Peer Raben, described how, "...the rejection isn't directed against the theatre *per se* but against the social function it has had for the last 200 years."⁵ This antiestablishment underpinning of the *antiteater*, and its socialist roots, set it against the bourgeois culture of the traditional theater.

Both the ideals on which the *antiteater* was founded and the subject matter on which its playwrights focused, demonstrate the important theme of social change and the influence of Bertolt Brecht and his groundbreaking idea of "epic theater." Epic theater rejected the "dramatic theater" that had dominated the German theatrical

tradition for centuries. Rather than focusing on a single individual in a single point of time and place, Brecht wished to bring the greater themes of war, revolution, and social and economic conflict onto the theatrical stage.⁶ Along with epic theater, Brecht espoused the idea of political theater, believing that “by changing the world, one changes humanity.”⁷ This means that the audience of a theater piece must not merely react personally to a moral question, but must be motivated to change society itself. These socialist ideas, which were fundamental for the *antiteater*, are reflected in many of Fassbinder’s plays, including *Bremer Freiheit*.

Another theatrical tradition that influenced the founders of the *antiteater* was the *Volksstück* tradition, which began in the 17th and 18th centuries and was revived in the 20th century with the works of Ödön von Horváth and Marieluise Fleisser. These two playwrights focused on lower-class subjects with a particular emphasis on language and its political power. This influence of the *Volksstück* tradition is also apparent in *Bremer Freiheit*.⁸

Bremer Freiheit was commissioned for Fassbinder by Burkhard Mauer while Fassbinder was working for the Bremer Theater. The play is based on documentary materials describing the actions of Geesche Gottfried, a woman who poisoned 15 people in Bremen between 1813 and 1828. The play condenses these fifteen years, focusing on Geesche’s situation and the process of her murders, rather than her ultimate capture and imprisonment.⁹ This focus on broader themes over the individual character and situation reflects the influence of epic theater. As in Morgner, Wolf, and Böll’s works, society is presented as something constructed by men, implying that it can therefore be changed. By making the audience sympathize with Geesche’s

condition, Fassbinder reveals that society itself is what needs to change, and not merely one's view towards women, something which reflects Brecht's political theater.

Bremer Freiheit is subtitled "Ein bürgerliches Trauerspiel," or a "middle-class tragedy," a reference to a genre originating in the eighteenth century that explored the problems of the growing bourgeois middle class as "an emerging social formation."¹⁰ Fassbinder takes this idea and twists it, so as to expose the power structure of the bourgeoisie for the instrument of tragic effect that he sees it to be. *Bremer Freiheit* is further related to this genre by Fassbinder's specific reference to Friedrich Hebbel's 1844 play *Maria Magdalene*, a play in the tradition of the "bürgerliches Trauerspiel," in which middle-class values and a domineering father lead the protagonist Klara to kill herself. The main character in *Bremer Freiheit*, Geesche Gottfried, repeats the final line of *Maria Magdalene*, "I do not understand the world anymore."¹¹ The connection between the two plays underscores Fassbinder's focus on issues explored in the earlier play, such as its condemnation of bourgeois attitudes and values.

Bremer Freiheit is set in 1820s Bremen, yet it deals with many issues contemporary to Fassbinder's time. The setting serves multiple purposes, allowing Fassbinder to draw on historical events and the tradition of the bürgerliches Trauerspiel, as well as connecting the issues of turbulent 19th century Germany to issues of turbulent postwar West German society. Napoleon's defeat of Prussia in 1806 was followed by attempted reform by various groups, inspired by Kant's "lofty concept of individual rights, obligations, and reasoned self interest." The aim of these attempted reforms was to create a modern bourgeois state that would not be tied down

by privileged estates and tense regionalism. Unfortunately these reforms proved to be untenable and most were reduced to failure.¹² By setting his play in this time so full of disappointed promise, Fassbinder is making a statement about his own age. *Bremer Freiheit* was published in 1972, also a period of potential change in German society. Many members of the younger generation were agitating for a transformation of society, as they saw the failure of de-Nazification policies as the inability of their parents' generation to face the Nazi past.¹³ By setting *Bremer Freiheit* in 1820s Germany, Fassbinder emphasizes for the audience that they must seize the chance for revolution while it is available, or their society is doomed to fail as Geesche's did.

The play does not have many characters and has a relatively simple plot, forcing the audience to reflect on the issues presented, rather than simply the storyline. Geesche is married to Miltenberger, who the audience sees treating her badly, both physically and emotionally abusing her. Soon Geesche gets fed up with his behavior and poisons him, taking control of his business.

She begins a relationship with Miltenberger's friend Gottfried, who was kind to her even when Miltenberger was abusive. Geesche's mother reprimands her for living in sin with Gottfried, and Geesche speaks out against her mother, telling her that it is her body and soul and she will act as she wishes. Geesche then puts poison in her mother's coffee. The audience next sees Geesche and Gottfried arguing, as Gottfried threatens to leave Geesche. Although he loves her, he says he needs a young and fresh girl who does not have ideas in her head, and who can give him his own child, as he does not like taking care of Geesche's children from her previous marriage. Geesche goes offstage and the audience hears her kill her children. After

their funeral, Geesche's father yells at her and Gottfried for their relationship, saying that it is illegal. Soon Geesche tells Gottfried that she and he are going to have a baby, and he gets angry with her and accuses her of tricking him. Geesche then poisons Gottfried, and as he is dying they get married so her child will be legitimate. After Gottfried dies, Geesche confesses her crimes to the priest, however he offers her no assistance, merely asks for his payment and leaves.

Geesche's father tries to marry her to her cousin, feeling she needs a man to take care of her. Geesche resists, and her cousin tells her father that he does not want to marry a woman who speaks her mind the way that Geesche does. Angry with her father for attempting to control her life, Geesche murders him too. Her brother Johann then returns home to try and help Geesche after the death of so many family members. He tries to take the business from her because she is a woman. When he refuses to listen to her, Geesche kills him as well. The final scene in the play is one in which Geesche's friend Luisa talks to her lightheartedly about the people in her life that continue to die. Geesche asks her how she can stand life playing a traditionally feminine role, but Luisa expresses no unhappiness. Geesche then tells Luisa that there is poison in her drink, and that by killing her she is trying to free Luisa from the submissive and meaningless life that she leads as a woman. After Luisa dies, Miltenberger's friend Rumpf appears and accuses Geesche of murder. The play ends with Geesche saying, "Now I'm going to die." She falls to her knees and begins to sing to her crucifix, as she has done after each prior murder.

The dramatic format of the work is as crucial as the setting in regard to the form and meaning of the play. Because it is a play, the reader is given no narrative

insight into the motivations of the individual characters, instead gaining knowledge of their thoughts through the external facets of dialogue and action. This focus on speech reflects the influence of the *Volksstück* tradition in Fassbinder's work, and the emphasis on a character's actions relates to Brecht's ideas of epic theater, which focuses on the idea of "gestus." Brecht defines this term as the actor's physical embodiment of his or her character. Therefore it focuses on movement, gestures, and tone of voice, as well as costumes and an actor's use of space on stage.¹⁴ These influences accentuate the aspects of Fassbinder's plays that are commentaries on his society, as Geesche is stuck in a society where women are repressed through the denial of a voice and the physical domination of men, both expressions of dialogue and action. Geesche uses these dramatic forms in her rebellion, as she speaks her mind and acts physically against those who attempt to repress her; ultimately she takes away whatever power of voice or physicality they once had through the act of murdering them.

Because men have the power of physical and verbal dominance over women, women are relegated to a sphere of subservience. This relationship of male dominance and female subservience is echoed and reinforced in the sexual and economic realms explored in the play. Early in the first act of *Bremer Freiheit*, Geesche's husband Miltenberger makes clear exactly what is expected of the ideal wife. He says "My wife. She knows who's boss. Get some brandy. (*Geesche exits.*) She knows the meaning of humility. And in bed, Jesus Christ she goes at it like a wild mare in heat. Just right for someone who's got what I do."¹⁵ The typical husband desires a subservient and humble woman, and one who will fulfill his sexual desires.

Miltenberger's command for Geesche to go get brandy, and her compliance to this demand, represents both verbal and physical female subservience.

The dominance of men through speech and action is connected to dominance within the sexual realm from the first scene of the play. The first words Geesche utters appear earnest, and are "I want to sleep with you," following which Miltenberger "starts hitting her, quite brutally, until she lies sobbing on the floor."¹⁶ This action expresses his physical and sexual dominance, as well as his denial of her sexual desires, connecting his sexuality as a man to brutality and physical force. This connection is present at the end of the scene as well, when Miltenberger orders Geesche to come over to him. She hesitates, and "tries to evade him, but he catches her and proceeds to paw her" while "she is clearly disgusted."¹⁷ He says to her, "Don't be absurd, woman. You have to learn who's master in this house. Who has a right to his little pleasures," before wrestling her into the bedroom, knocking her down, and ultimately kissing her.¹⁸ By tying sexuality to physical might, Miltenberger denies Geesche any control or choice, forcing her to be passive as he dominates her both through violence and sexual acts.

These two interactions between Geesche and Miltenberger show not only Miltenberger's physical domination, but also how he silences her, as only he holds the power of speech. He orders her to speak at one point, as all of his friends observe them, demanding of her, "Say, I want you," and when she cannot finish the sentence and attempts to run away he catches her, holds her, and forces her to say it.¹⁹ This ties speech and vocalization to both sexual and physical power, and by bringing these

three elements together in the being of a “typical” husband, and one supported and encouraged by his male peers, Fassbinder ties them to prevailing gender roles.

Even Geesche’s father expects her to follow these gender roles. In a conversation much later in the play, Geesche and her father argue and he declares, “Women who speak their minds are in ignorance of the law. The law which forbids it.”²⁰ He then goes on to accuse both Geesche and Gottfried of breaking the law, as they are not married although living together and participating in a sexual relationship. As Geesche attempts to come to Gottfried’s defense her father continually silences her. He even yells at Gottfried, “Some *man*, who lets his woman do the talking!”²¹ Thus a woman’s voice must be disregarded and silenced. Geesche’s talking back to her father is an instance of rebellion, something which occurs more often as the play progresses.

These themes of voice and dominance are present from the opening lines of the play. The first scene begins with Geesche’s husband Miltenberger reading the newspaper, and as he does so he is commanding her to do various things. It starts:

Paper...Coffee...Brandy...Shut the windows...Quiet!...Bread and
gravy...Salt...On the 31st of October, 1814 we shall lay to rest our beloved
mother, Clara Mathilde Beez, née Steinbacher, taken from us by the good
Lord...Quiet!...Brandy...This constant yowling will be the death of me...
More coffee...So the beheading is to be Friday – November 3, 1814, in the
market square...Brandy...When I say brandy woman, I mean a bottle and not
a few measly drops...Here’s to you...Cigar...Light...Too hot in here...Oh to
have one evening of peace in this house...Quiet!...Shut the
windows...*Another* ghost spotted in Bremen...We don’t *need* the fire that
intense...Strange things occurring in this city...Prepare my nightcap, this
headache is...Quiet!...My medicine.²²

This beginning presents the husband as the master and the one who gives orders within the household, and the wife as the subordinate, who is supposed to

bring him everything he asks for. Miltenberger barks out his commands almost as an afterthought, by mixing commands directed at his wife in with what he is reading as he skims through the newspaper. Fassbinder makes it clear that Miltenberger's dismissive attitude towards his wife in this situation is one that is completely natural. He is not purposefully being rude, this is merely the dynamic of their relationship. This was purposeful on Fassbinder's part, as the actor who played Miltenberger in the original production of *Bremer Freiheit* is described as having,

...started the first speech of the play barking orders to Geesche. Fassbinder urged the very opposite. By delivering his text in a soft, gentle voice, Hirschmüller revealed more about the social context. He did not have to bellow for Geesche to do his bidding. Her gratification of his wishes without force suggested either years of a process that had led to her submission or even more insidiously, a state in which a master-and-servant relationship was merely expected.²³

Fassbinder's stage directions show the extent to which the gender roles should appear ingrained from the very beginning. This interaction, as well as the ones that follow in the remainder of the first scene, which portrays Miltenberger and his friends verbally abusing women in general and Geesche in particular, give the audience immediate insight into the prevailing gender roles inherent in the society in which the play is set.

Not long after Miltenberger's friends arrive they begin discussing a whorehouse in which some of the girls have been discovered to have syphilis. The men go through the names of which prostitutes they have slept with, and rejoice that they have not slept with any of the women who are infected. The openness with which they discuss these exploits, while Geesche is in the next room and could easily overhear their conversation, evidences that there is no shame in a married man sleeping with prostitutes; on the contrary, it seems to be a point of pride,²⁴ and

demonstrates a man's lack of obligations to the women of whom he expects everything. Even marriage is not enough of a commitment to prevent a man from obtaining whatever pleasure he wants.

It is not just the male characters in the play that act in ways compliant with the gender expectations of their society. Both Geesche and her mother provide the audience with an understanding of the inherent gender expectations, and emphasize how ingrained these are. Geesche's mother is angry and upset after Miltenberger dies and Geesche begins living with Gottfried, to whom she is not married. Although Gottfried is in many ways taking advantage of Geesche's love for him, using her as a sexual object without promising her anything in return, it is Geesche who is criticized for living with Gottfried out of wedlock. As a man in this society, Gottfried is free to act as he wishes, as long as he maintains power over Geesche; only Geesche acts against society's prescribed ideals by living with Gottfried out of wedlock. A woman must be married when sleeping with a man, yet it is accepted, and almost expected, for a man to seek gratification wherever he can.

In this scene Geesche's mother yells at her, describing how "living with a man without benefit of the Sacrament" has brought shame upon both Geesche and herself, as it mocks her attempts to be "a good Christian mother."²⁵ The importance of religion to society is evidenced by her mother's concerns, and Geesche's actions against religion are yet another way in which she rebels. As Geesche tries to explain why she feels free living with Gottfried in this manner and that she does not feel the need to be married, her mother tells her that, "Women have to stifle these ideas the moment they arise." She laments, "My child, when you were just this big didn't I

guide you on the correct path to womanliness? Explain to you over and over again the meaning of propriety? What *you* are, and what a *man* is, and what he thinks... There is simply no comparison.”²⁶ Both men and women in Geesche’s society believe that the two genders are incomparable and inherently unequal. In some instances the female characters use this to their advantage. In order to escape from Gottfried’s desire to control her and his inability to love her as she desires him to, Geesche poisons Gottfried. With the arrival of the priest Geesche confesses what she has done, giving reasons for her actions that hinge solely on her position as a woman. She says,

I have been pregnant four months and the father refuses to acknowledge that it’s his. That drives a woman insane, Father. She can’t control her thoughts. You lose perspective. What’s good is evil and the evil good. You cry nights on end into your pillow and you pray to God for help... which never comes. Can you imagine how alone you are when no one listens? Father, how lonely and utterly abandoned? The God doesn’t exist who knows what that’s like and who would still turn a vengeful eye on the wretched woman. Loneliness, dear Father, is the worst thing in the world.²⁷

The excuses that Geesche gives for Gottfried’s murder are the conditions of loneliness, pregnancy, and ultimately womanhood. By using her pregnancy and her womanhood as an excuse for murder, Geesche herself uses ingrained gender roles to her advantage. The association between these aspects of her gender and her loneliness implies a connection between being a woman and being lonely. Therefore Geesche’s isolation comes from her very situation as a woman, and only seems to increase as she attempts to break free of society’s expectations. Even if she were to follow these expectations and act silently and passively, she would still be lonely.

The passage in which Geesche confesses to the priest is important not only because it shows how entrenched she is within society, but also because it demonstrates that one can begin to break free. She is beginning to speak her mind,

breaking the assumption that women should remain quiet and submissive. The statement “can you imagine how alone you are when no one listens? Father, how lonely and utterly abandoned?” captures the pain and isolation that she feels. Geesche’s questioning of God’s ability to understand her actions, and those of women in similar situations, represents the rejection of religion, yet another essential element of her society. Even the priest is not moved by this powerful and desperate confession. After Geesche’s confession her father enters the room and the priest merely rises and requests his payment before leaving them alone.

Even before this passage, Geesche has begun to rebel against the silence expected of women. She becomes extremely vocal about her opinions and open in her actions, again utilizing the dramatic form in bringing her subversive desires to the audience’s attention. As women are expected to be silent and not to act, her outspokenness and willingness to commit murder rebel against these expectations. Her sexuality is the subject of many of her diatribes towards those she interacts with, offering yet another rejection of the expected gender roles of her society, in which sexuality is dominated by the male figure. She fights with her mother, crying, “I love him, mother and I don’t care what the world says. I want him to mount me,” and, “I want that man, in my bed. I don’t sleep with a sacrament. I sleep with arms, and shoulders. I sleep with legs, mother...”²⁸ Geesche refuses to be silenced, and expresses a claim upon her own sexuality and an ownership of her body as a sexual being. We will see a similar character in Johanna, the most prominent female character in *Billiard um Halbzehn*. Johanna also speaks her mind, and she acts contrary to both her family and society’s expectations by marrying a man who

promises her a mature and healthy sexual relationship. She refuses to accept what is expected of her, as dictated by tradition.

Geesche also vocalizes her emotions in several scenes with her lover and financial partner Gottfried, at one point passionately describing how she sees her mother's life in contrast to her father's presentation of it in the obituary he wrote:

Can you imagine what mother's life was like, Michael? No? Father writes 'in the perfect contentment of a happy marriage.' No, not for mother. She wasn't satisfied a single day in her life. Happiness for mother – that meant solace in the bosom of the Lord, not father's bosom. She was his drudge, and his housepet. Her lot was obedience. The only freedom she knew was in her conversations with God. And they call that a happy marriage! She never had her way, she had to answer his every whim – *his* whim, and he could smack her or hump her as he pleased. Very cozy for father. *That's* what he calls his 'great loss.' Mother didn't have a life, Michael. Death was a blessing.²⁹

Gottfried completely dismisses this outburst, saying merely that he wants "coffee and something to eat... you think too much for a woman. Too much of a strain, Geesche. You'll get wrinkles, grey hair."³⁰ Even as Geesche attempts to break out of the mold in which society has trapped her, Fassbinder makes it clear through his portrayal of the other characters' reactions that she will never be able to escape. Even if she acts in a manner contrary to their expectations, their refusal to treat her differently prevents any true change. This is also demonstrated in the passage in which her father berates Gottfried for taking advantage of her, as she attempts to defend her lover and her father continually tells her to be quiet and dismisses her for talking back to him.³¹

Geesche tries to claim independence in her life not merely through the ability to speak and act freely, but also in an economic sense. After finally gaining control of her deceased husband's business, she fights against both her father and her brother as

they try to take her financial independence away from her. Her father introduces her to his nephew, who would marry her and allow her to “say goodbye to the chaos [her] life has become – no more sorrow, embarrassment, dishonor.” Geesche responds in the blunt manner she has developed, telling her father “your little girl has outgrown the old morality. She can find a bed-partner on her own.”³² Her father then protests that she cannot run the business as a woman and says that by having given Miltenberger the money to start the business he now has a stake in it. She offers to buy him out, which he dismisses entirely, saying, “I didn’t come here to discuss, I came to inform. The decision has been made.”³³ Geesche refutes both his expectations and those of her society by refusing to accept that answer. She says, “I won’t obey. I am a human being like every other human being and I can make my own decisions. Right now I’m not interested in this man. Nor any other man. When the itch between my legs needs something like a man to satisfy it, I’ll go looking.”³⁴ Her economic rights are challenged at the same time as her right to her own sexuality and to speak her mind.

She uses a very reasoned and less emotional argument when telling her brother Johann that she wishes to keep the firm, yet he too dismisses her desire for economic involvement. He says,

Little sister, little sister, you’re just a woman. Women can learn plenty of things, but they can never enjoy work. You’ll soon get used to keeping house again. You’ll be humming a tune while you tend the stove, not a worry in your head. Work would only toughen you. It’d destroy your softer, feminine qualities. And of course you’ll be wanting another man to take to your bosom.³⁵

Her argument that she “had to struggle to master this business...had to study hard” and that being alone in the world “the business has become...[her] life,” in no way

appeases him, even after she assures him “you’ll get your rightful share. I don’t want anything that doesn’t belong to me, but I do stand firm on this point: *no one* takes my work from me, thank you.”³⁶ No matter how rational Geesche’s voice and actions are, the other members of her society continually dismiss her attempts to create something she can claim as her identity, if it goes against their societal expectations.

Even with her limited economic success, Geesche is unable to have any success in reforming her sexual role. She cannot move away from men’s assumptions of her “softer, feminine qualities” and the necessity of a man “to take to [her] bosom.” As much as she tries to find love, and thinks she has done so with Gottfried, Geesche is continually thrown aside until all that she has left is her business. Her refusal to hand it over to her brother emphasizes that this is the only way she has gained any control, and therefore the only way she has affected a change. This relates once again to the socialist themes running through the play, as a change in her economic situation comes first, through which she hopes to create a change in the rest of society. This is similar to what Barbara does in *Amanda*, where she attempts to alter gender roles in society by treating her relationship with men as a career. However, although she receives economic gains by taking money from the men she swindles, Barbara is unable to affect change in society, just like Geesche.

This change in society fails to surface because Barbara and Geesche are the only ones changing. *Bremer Freiheit* chronicles Geesche’s attempt to redefine herself and to give herself an identity that she can understand and accept. The constant rejection by society at large, and within it by everyone she knows and loves, prevents her from forming an identity in which she is an individual within a group. Her

subjective reality is one in which she has had to set herself against an all-encompassing “them” that is the rest of society. She best expresses this perceived reality, and how she has defined herself in relation to society, in the scene in which she is talking to her brother Johann. Johann’s reaction to Geesche’s demands for continued freedom and decision-making power demonstrates precisely why her subjective reality stands in contrast to the traditions of society, making it irreconcilable with the objective reality in which she lives. Geesche tells Johann,

The man *I* want to take to *my* heart – I’ll tell you what he’d have to be like. He’d have to accept the fact that women can think, that they have the power of reason. Maybe the man hasn’t been born yet who can do that, in which case I’ll do without...I was put on this earth to use my brain, and to express my thoughts without interruption...I will not simply hand over the business. Never. I’ll live my life the way I want. To *live* a life, that’s what all human beings should strive for. And women are human beings too, even if the men and women who recognize that are few and far between.³⁷

When she tells Johann that he can either accept this or leave, he bellows at her “I go when I want, Geesche. And I do what I want. A woman! That’s the last thing I’d let dictate to me. Especially my sister.”³⁸ The use of the word “thing” is particularly telling, as it places Geesche, as a woman, in a nonhuman role, just as the Trojans begin to do in *Kassandra*. Women are mere objects in Johann’s eyes, even his sister whose value one might expect him to acknowledge due to their familial relationship. This is not enough, however, to elevate her above his idea of “women”; in fact, her being his sister increases the anger he feels when she speaks back to him.

Geesche responds to Johann’s outburst calmly, saying merely, “I’ll give you a nice cup of tea to warm you up, brother,” and proceeds to poison him.

The fact that Geesche uses poison, rather than physical violence, to eliminate those who stand in her way, allows her to continue murdering without suspicion. The

fact that she is a woman and expected to serve others disguises her actions, as she is able to remain within her prescribed gender roles while rebelling against them.

Women traditionally favor poison as a means of murder, as commonly accepted gender roles often expect women to serve others. As men are defined as physical beings in the society of the play, murder would seem to be the ultimate masculine act; it represents physical domination by eliminating the physicality of the murdered in reducing him or her to nothing. However, Geesche murders without using physical force, therefore embracing the passivity that is deemed feminine within her society.

Geesche embraces the act of murder once it seems to be the only action that has any effect within her life. Fighting against those who try to repress her does not change her position in society or force anyone to take her seriously; instead, they all continue to dismiss her as a woman who should remain passive and silent. Johann reacts to her request to continue to run the business with a flat-out rejection of her skills, merely because she is a woman, and her father threatens to take her to court if she doesn't behave as a woman is supposed to in society.³⁹ This leaves Geesche with seemingly no way to free herself and gain independence, without eliminating him and all other threats from her life. She feels she is left with no option besides submitting to society or murdering those that oppose her ability to live the life she wishes to lead. She becomes an almost heartless character by the end, one for who murder is the only action that has ever had an effect. Thus she uses murder to move past every obstacle in her way, killing not only the men who stand in her way, but her mother and children as well.

At the end of the play Geesche poisons her friend Luisa, after Luisa tells her that she has “never once felt the desire to know more about the world than [she does] now.”⁴⁰ Luisa seems perfectly happy conforming to society and offers no threat to Geesche or Geesche’s life; she even tells Geesche that she has been placing bets on who will be the next of her family to die, making light of this serious situation.⁴¹ The other people she murders present obstacles in her attempts to gain what she hopes will be happiness, however Luisa in no way wishes to interfere in Geesche’s life. Geesche’s murder of Luisa therefore seems unnecessary, and makes it hard for the audience to sympathize with her. Although Geesche has struggled to find a way to solve her problems, sympathy for her lessens once she uses the one way that has proven successful in a situation where it feels especially inappropriate. By portraying Geesche as a morally ambiguous character, Fassbinder avoids creating a dichotomy between men and women within the play. He does not merely depict a virtuous woman murdering abusive men, as Geesche murders her innocent children and her nonthreatening friend. This emphasizes the fact that Geesche is acting as an individual as much as a woman; she is a human, with all the flaws of humanity, and like every character in the play, cannot be reduced to her gender.

Once she is caught, Geesche tells the audience that she welcomes death, saying, “Now I’m going to die.”⁴² She also offers some sort of explanation for her murder of Luisa by telling Luisa, “I wanted to save you from the kind of life you’re having to lead,”⁴³ which is ultimately the same life that Geesche herself is relegated to in her society. By murdering Luisa, Geesche is symbolically freeing herself as well. The audience never discovers whether Geesche’s fate really is death, and the

questions and ambiguities we are left with at the end of the play make the conclusion that much more powerful. Just as Fassbinder never makes clear Geesche's immediate motivations for speaking up and acting out against society, he lets the audience make up its own mind as to many of her ultimate motivations. In this way he echoes Brecht's epic theater, in requiring the audience to move beyond passive observation and reflect intellectually on the scenes portrayed. Through this, the members of the audience will hopefully think further about their own society.

Chapter Four: Heinrich Böll's *Billiard um Halbzehn*

Heinrich Böll's most important female protagonist in *Billiard um Halbzehn*, Johanna Fähmel, has a similar experience to Morgner, Wolf, and Fassbinder's protagonists, in that she finds herself isolated within a society that she cannot accept and cannot change. However her isolation comes not from her position as a woman, as much as from her overwhelming sense of morality and strict ethical code. The society in which she lives does not share her value system, a fact which she refuses to accept. Thus she spends much of the novel, and much of her life, in a sanatorium for those with psychological disabilities. Although not crazy, Johanna would rather remain in the sanatorium than compromise her values by returning to the outside world.

Billiard um Halbzehn follows the Fähmel family, and those associated with it, through four generations, using memories to present past events and characters that have since died. The narrative voice of the novel switches from first-person to third-person, with different characters narrating throughout. This gives the reader insight into each character from many different perspectives, ranging from the characters' own thoughts to the perceptions of those characters with whom he or she associates, and provides particularly well-rounded insight into the constitution of each character. This shifting narrative voice is the reason that some of the quotations in this chapter will be in the first-person, and some in the third-person.

Billiard um Halbzehn is set in 1958, at the height of the "economic miracle" following the Second World War, at which time Germany was attempting to discover

the best way to move forward and recreate a functioning society without ignoring the atrocities of its past. East and West Germany took different paths in this process. In the East, the official stance of the GDR was that society had developed within an “anti-fascist state that, in its transition to socialism, had definitively severed links with the Third Reich.”¹ This claim left little room for honest discussion of how the Nazi legacy may or may not have remained within society. In West Germany, the difficulty of finding competent people to fill the void left by de-Nazification often led people to turn a blind eye to the many former Nazis that maintained public positions and positions of power.² This well-known and recognized phenomenon in West Germany is one that is clearly revealed in Böll’s novel, as Johanna is angry at the fact that former perpetrators of violence remain in powerful positions.

When analyzing the choices that Johanna makes, we cannot ignore the fact that she is acting as a woman, as this sets her in contrast to the male characters Böll depicts. What also sets her apart is her extreme conviction and her willingness to act upon her beliefs, a fact that the men readily acknowledge. Heinrich Fähmel, her husband of many years who clearly admires and loves her, remembers the time during the Wilhelmine Empire when she speaks bluntly at the garrison commandant’s ball, saying, “that fool of a Kaiser,” while refusing to drink any champagne, eat any hare, or dance with anyone.³ She is not worried about causing trouble for her husband, who has just been “promoted to first lieutenant and commissioned to build the fortifications,” or about the commotion she causes in silencing the entire room, when “...she [says] it once again, in the silence: ‘The fool of a Kaiser.’”⁴ The severity of this statement is made clear by Heinrich as he describes how, “no one dared repeat

what Johanna had said. Blasphemies of that nature were not even put into the record.”⁵ Johanna believes so strongly in her moral standards, that she is unable to keep silent when she sees someone acting against them, as she feels the Kaiser is doing. Her idea of morality requires one to speak out in the face of injustice.

Heinrich is unable to live up to Johanna’s standards, as he compromises with society and acts according to what is expected of him. Although he admits that he should have said, “that I agreed with her one hundred per cent,” he makes an excuse for her by claiming that Johanna is pregnant and has lost two of her brothers and a daughter in the recent past. As he recalls this, however, he admits yet again that he “should have been saying, ‘I agree with my wife, absolutely.’”⁶ The fact that she is pregnant and overcome by emotion allows the men to forgive her words and lets her escape the inevitable punishment that she would otherwise have incurred, because she displays weaknesses expected of a woman. Although society is willing to forgive her actions and excuses them because of her gender, Johanna is unable to forgive society in return for what she sees as its moral deficiencies.

One compromise that Heinrich makes in order to be accepted by society is to join the military reserves before World War II, although he does not believe in what the army is doing any more than his wife does. Johanna is never able to accept Heinrich’s decision to join the army. As she reflects, “I took his sword and humbled it. I used it to scrape muck from behind the moldings, rust off the iron benches in the garden, dug holes for my plants with it. It was too awkward for peeling potatoes.”⁷ By decommissioning his sword for these dirty tasks, Johanna does what Heinrich is unable to do, and rejects the army and what it stands for.

Not only are the men in her life unable to live up to her high moral standards, but they often do not even recognize the dangers that Johanna sees within society. Johanna describes Heinrich's inability to understand the consequences of the rise of the Nazis. He is unable to realize this until their son Robert runs away so as not to have to join the party, while their other son, Otto, has become a "husk of a son" in embracing Nazi beliefs and politics. Johanna, however, recognizes the danger from the beginning, saying, "...you'll see what harmless people are capable of."⁸

Aware of the detrimental influences of Nazi ideology, Johanna describes Otto as only a "husk" many times:

He was Otto, yet he wasn't, any more...I understood what it means when they say there was only a husk of a man left. Otto now was only the husk of the real Otto, and the husk had suddenly taken on a new content. He'd not merely tasted the *Host of the Beast*,* he'd been inoculated with it. They'd sucked out his old blood and pumped new in. There was murder in his eyes...⁹

The imagery Johanna uses in describing Otto he sides with the nationalists, speaking of him as merely a husk of himself and of a body with foreign blood flowing through his veins, stands in sharp contrast to the imagery she uses when describing those who do not compromise. She celebrates her oldest son Robert's proletarian friends Ferdi and Schrella who attempt to fight against the right-wing followers, calling both Ferdi and Schrella "angels" and describing how if they had not died young they would have refused to compromise. They both were killed by Nazi sympathizers, yet Johanna believes that, had they lived, they would have assisted her in getting a gun to right the wrongs remaining in society.¹⁰ This contrasting imagery between husks and angels,

* The "Host of the Beast" as used throughout the novel symbolizes the embrace of right-wing ideology, such as the kind that brought the Nazis to power. It is a representation of the celebration of militarism, such as was associated with Hindenburg and the First World War, as well as with German national power. The "Host of the Beast" is contrasted with those described as "lambs," who are innocent of this impulse and most often become victims of those who have embraced this ideology.

one merely a physical shell and one the embodiment of spirit, emphasizes Johanna's reverence for those who fight over those who have taken "the Host of the Beast." This continues the metaphor of "Lamb" against "Beast," which Johanna uses to contrast those who fought against the rise of right-wing *volkish* groups against those who embraced their militaristic and racist ideologies.

Johanna's hatred for the military coincides with her hatred for those who violate her set of moral standards. She describes how "swords should be flung down and trampled on, and so should privileges...It's all they're good for, corruption that they are...Eat what everybody eats, read what everybody reads, wear the clothes everybody wears, then you'll come nearest to the truth."¹¹ Thus, those who do not put themselves above others, those who humble themselves, are closest to the truth. She tells her son Robert how to remain virtuous:

Noblesse oblige, obliges you to eat sawdust when everyone else is eating it, to read patriotic rubbish in the local paper instead of magazines for cultivated people. No, don't touch any of it, Robert – Gretz' patés, or the Abbot's butter and honey, his pieces of gold and his juggled hare, *whywhywhy*, when others haven't any. Let the unprivileged eat their honey and butter in peace, it doesn't corrupt their stomach and brain. But not you, Robert; you must eat this dirt-poor bread. Tears of truth will well up in your eyes; wear shabby clothes, and be free.¹²

Here Johanna lays out the foundation for her moral guidelines, namely that her wealth and privilege obliges her to care for others and to treat them as well and as fairly as possible. She says this will bring freedom; however, in her case it only brings isolation. Because of her convictions, Johanna goes so far as to try to get on a train car with the Jews that are being sent to concentration camps.¹³ She cannot accept the injustice that she sees in selecting some segments of the population for a terrible fate, dividing society into those worthy and those not. She attempts to join the Jews being

taken to concentration camps as a way to follow these convictions and make sure that she is accorded no privilege above those treated the worst in her society. Just as in Morgner, Wolf, and Fassbinder's works, as Johanna acts alone she is unable to affect change within society, and is ultimately confined in the sanatorium. Her actions are so exceptional within her society, that her family's only option to save her from jail is to declare her insane.

Within the sanatorium Johanna is not only physically isolated from society, but also emotionally isolated by her inability and reluctance to live in the present. She is thus trapped in time, and the first chapter in which she assumes the narrative voice demonstrates this multiple times. She spends much of it talking to Robert in her head, in a monologue that revolves around past events, specifically what happened after he disappeared to escape the pressure of Nazi sympathizers. In this interior monologue, Johanna seems to pass in and out of awareness of the current time: at one point she discusses a trip to Kisslingen and the abbey that Heinrich built, which her son Robert destroyed during the war. She says, "...Choose your season, boy. But Advent will please Edith the most...The brothers' singing will gladden her adventist heart, and gladden that dim church your father built, St. Anthony's in the Kissa Valley..."¹⁴ At this point, Edith, Robert's wife, has been dead for some time, having been killed by a bomb during the war. The church that Johanna mentions has also been destroyed for many years. By acting as if Edith is alive and the church is still standing, Johanna refuses to acknowledge the past. Robert's son Joseph is deciding whether or not to rebuild the abbey at the very same time that Johanna is speaking about it as if it were

never destroyed. Later in the chapter, Johanna describes life in the sanatorium, saying,

Here we don't think of time as an indefinite continuous concept but rather as separate units which must not be related and become history. Do you understand?...With us, time is always *today*, Verdun is today and today Heinrich died and Otto fell, it's May 31, 1942, today, and today Heinrich whispered in my ear...¹⁵

Being trapped in her mind and the past is a conscious choice; as she makes clear to Robert, she knows exactly where she is. She says, "Don't think I'm crazy, I know exactly where we are. In Denklingen. You can see the road out there, between the trees running along the blue wall, to where the yellow buses crawl by like beetles."¹⁶ However, she also says, "...I don't want to go out, I don't want to know what time it is, or have to feel every day that his secret laughter has been killed and that the hidden spring within the hidden wheels has snapped."¹⁷ Johanna desires to hide from objective reality, preferring to keep an image of her husband as she wants him to be, free from pain and disappointment. She later asks Heinrich, "...spare me the diary in your eyes. I'm sailing along on the little diary page, marked May 31, 1942. Have pity on me, beloved, don't burn my little paper boat made of that folded diary page, don't spill me into the sea of sixteen years forever gone..."¹⁸ and "Come in, welcome,* but don't kiss me; don't burn my little boat...Change the focus of your eyes, old man, I'm not blind, just crazy and perfectly well able to read the date on the calendar down the hall. It's September 6, 1958."¹⁹ Johanna thus knows very well the objective temporal reality of her situation, yet she chooses to live within the subjective world of

* There is a difference between the English translation, "welcome" and the original German *bring Glück herein*, as the latter translates more precisely to "bring happiness in." Thus Johanna sees Heinrich as a source of happiness, even as she fears him destroying her reverie.

her memories and according to her personal value system. Her inability to live in the world as it is at present is a rejection of society and its prevailing values.

However, this rejection is not one-sided. Just as Johanna is unable to understand others, her granddaughter Ruth is unable to understand Johanna. Ruth feels separated from Johanna, and experiences her grandmother's determination to follow her moral guidelines as something painful, rather than something admirable. During the war Johanna withheld the extra food she was given from her own children, instead giving it away to those less fortunate. Behaviors such as this have distanced Johanna from her grandchildren, and make her seem foreign and difficult to understand. Ruth says:

I don't want to understand Grandmother, I don't want to; her craziness is a lie. She wouldn't give us anything to eat, and I was glad when she'd gone and we were given more. Maybe you're right, maybe she was great and still is, but I don't want to know about greatness.... Let her come back again and sit with us in the evenings, but please don't give her the key to the kitchen, please don't. I've seen hunger on the teacher's face and I'm scared of it...²⁰

For Ruth, she and her grandmother will remain separate emotionally, whether or not they are physically reunited. Ruth's disinclination to know her grandmother and understand her values shows how Johanna would remain isolated from many in her family, even if she returned from the sanatorium. This relationship underscores a crucial aspect of Johanna's isolation, which is that its foundation in moral values does not make it any more "moral" than the society from which she separates herself. Morality is intrinsically subjective, as represented in this passage narrated by Ruth. While Johanna sees herself acting in a manner that is above the debase society of her time, the fact that she denied her family food in a time of severe rationing and starvation can be seen as contrary to the values many would hold as moral. Johanna's

determination to follow her values is so strong, that she acts in a way contrary to what is expected of her by society. She fails to see the details and necessary flaws of humanity within the greater picture of a moral society. Therefore she not only rejects society, but is incompatible with it on a fundamental level.

Johanna is not only separated from her relatives and society, but she is also distanced from the family in which she was raised. By marrying Heinrich she goes against her parents' expectations in multiple ways. The first is that Heinrich promises her an untraditional marriage, one in which, he says, "I would set her free from conventionality, the properness that was lacking in her father's voice.* I'd buy her marvelous hats, large as cartwheels, made of rough green straw. I had no desire to be her lord and master. I wanted to love her..."²¹ Thus, love goes against convention and properness. Johanna also resists her family's socioeconomic position by marrying Heinrich. Her family has "lived on Modest Street for three hundred years."²² They are symbols of Cologne's patrician class and the entrenched bourgeoisie, while Heinrich has come to the city alone and worked his way up in society.

Heinrich will allow Johanna to do many things she could never do at home, including little things like eating with her fingers.²³ She describes him as having rescued her from "that dreadful house where they all had huddled for four hundred years, trying in vain to free themselves."²⁴ Her observations about her parents and relatives are extensive, and emphasize repeatedly what is expected of her in marriage

* Again, there is a discrepancy between the translation "was lacking in her father's voice," and the German *die nicht zur Stimme ihres Vaters paßte*, as the latter translates more precisely to "did not fit her father's voice." Thus, it is not necessarily that her father lacks this tone of conventionality, but rather that he has this tone although it does not fit his personality.

and as a woman, as well as her desire for everything opposite to these expectations; Heinrich and his love represent the fulfillment of these desires.

When they sat down in the garden to drink wine, I used to sit up there in the roof garden, during the summer evenings. Evenings for men, evenings for women, and in the women's shrill laughter I could hear what I heard in their husbands' raucous laughter: despair. When the wine loosened their tongues and freed them of tabus, when the smell of the summer night let them out of their prisons of hypocrisy, it all came out into the open. They were neither rich enough nor poor enough to find out that only the transient is permanent. And I longed for the ephemeral, though I'd been brought up for permanent things, marriage, loyalty, honor, the bedroom where only duty lay, not pleasure...I didn't want any part of their despair, or to feed on gloomy legacy handed down from generation to generation...I was fifteen, sixteen, seventeen, eighteen and I could see the hard, waiting look in my mother's eyes. She had been thrown to the wolves. Should I, then, be spared the same fate? The wolves were growing up, into beer-drinkers wearing peaked caps, both the attractive and the less attractive ones. I looked at their hands and their eyes and had the awful curse laid on me of knowing how they'd look at forty, at sixty, with purple veins in their skin and never smelling of good times after work. Men, responsibility. Obeying the law, imparting a sense of history to children, counting money and resolved on political reason, all were doomed to partake of the *Host of the Beast*, like my brothers. They were young in years only, and only one thing – death – promised them glory, would give them greatness and enfold them in veils of myth. Time was nothing but a means of bringing them closer to death...Only one thing was forbidden: to want to live and play. Do you understand me, old man? Play was a deadly sin. Not sport, they put up with that, it kept you lively, made you graceful, pretty, and stimulated their wolfish appetite. Dolls' houses: good, they were all for housewifely and motherly instincts. Dancing: that was good, too, part of the marriage market. But if I wanted to dance just to please myself, up in my room in my petticoat, that was a sin, because it wasn't a duty. I could let the wearers of caps paw me as much as they wanted at a dance, in the hallway shadow, or after a picnic in the country, or in a forest shadow put up with their less ambitious caresses. After all, we're not prudes. And I prayed for him, the one who would set me free and save me from death in the wolves' lair. I prayed for that while I put the white *Sacrament* to my lips and saw you over there at your studio window...²⁵

The entrenched aspect of her family's life, the predictability and rigidity, is something that Johanna cannot accept. As a woman she is expected to perform her duty, and pleasure is strictly forbidden. By marrying Heinrich she declares her independence

from her family's bourgeois values and their world, believing in the kind of life Heinrich offers her. She disdains what her family holds as important, rejecting their social values and embracing instead a life of love and moral virtue.

Johanna and Heinrich defy not only her parents' norms, but also many expectations of society, by desiring a marriage based on ideals of love and equality. They seem to have a healthy sexual relationship, with Heinrich promising her, "Don't worry, I'll love you, there'll be none of those dreadful things your school friends tell you about, the things that are supposed to happen on wedding nights. Don't believe a word of what those fools tell you, we'll laugh when it gets to that point, truly..." He further emphasizes this sexual openness by stating:

I won't be able to give you the demonic, sham or genuine, in any shape or fashion, and what your school friends make into hair-raising stories will never happen to us in the bedroom, but out in the open air, so you can see the sky over you and have grass and leaves falling on your face, and smell the autumn evening, and not feel you're doing some disgusting gymnastic exercise that you have to go through...²⁶

Johanna proves that Heinrich fulfills this promise when, after losing her virginity, she describes herself "already longing for what a few hours before I'd feared."²⁷ This goes against Johanna's ancestors, who "would have been ashamed to turn duty into pleasure."²⁸ This idea is unique to *Billiard um Halbzehn*, when compared to the other works examined in this thesis, as Johanna manages to find a partner with whom to embrace a reciprocal sexual relationship. In the first chapter that Irmtraud Morgner reads in *Die Hexe im Landhaus*, Barbara feels that the only option available to her is to manipulate society's ideas of sexuality by marrying men to exploit them, rather than entering into an equal partnership with any one man. Cassandra struggles to find a sexual relationship that is also loving, as she has a

mostly chaste relationship with the one man she truly loves and sexual relationships with men she doesn't love at all. Geesche wants an equal and loving relationship, but no man is willing to give it to her. Not one of these characters is truly able to break free of what society expects of a sexual relationship between two people of opposite genders.

However, Johanna is not an exception in every way, and in some ways she is similar to Geesche. Just as Geesche eventually does, Johanna speaks her mind in every situation. When Johanna goes to visit an old school friend who tells her that Robert's running away is politically stupid, she retorts, "I can tell from looking at you what being politically clever leads to." When the man asks, "My God, should we all hang ourselves?" she bluntly responds, "All of *you*, yes."²⁹ Of the old general who comes to join the residents at the sanatorium, she asks,

Have you ever thought of how much pedagogical sweat was wasted in the space of a few months? All in vain. How was it none of you ever had the idea of setting up a machine gun at the entrance of the trade schools and colleges, right after the exams, and shoot dead all those radiant successful graduates?...³⁰

She also says to him:

... stop complaining about losing the war. Good heavens, did you really lose two wars, one after the other? You could have lost seven for all of me. Stop your sniveling, I wouldn't give five cents for all the wars you lost; losing children is worse than losing wars.³¹

For Johanna, this fixation on the outcome of the war and society's unconcern for the harm that it has caused is entirely unacceptable. Her sardonic tone reveals her anger, and most particularly the indignation that she feels that people do not speak out against what she sees as outrageous injustices. Later, once she's out of the sanatorium, she asks her family:

Are you all blind, then? So easily fooled? Don't you see they'd kill you all for less than a gesture, for less than a sandwich? You needn't even be dark-haired or blond any more, or show your grandmother's birth certificate. They'd kill you if they just didn't like your faces. Didn't you see the posters on the walls? Are you all blind? You just don't know any more where you are. I tell you, dearest, the whole pack of them have partaken of the *Host of the Beast*...³²

Johanna speaks here in a sardonic tone, revealing her anger even at those that she loves. Johanna's inability to be silent when she sees injustice connects her to both Cassandra and Geesche. Cassandra speaks out when she sees Troy heading in a dangerous direction, just as Johanna speaks out about the dangers of the Nazis; like Cassandra, Johanna is ignored until it is too late. Geesche too speaks out against what she sees as injustice, although she does so most often within intimate relationships, rather than in public settings; however, the issues that Geesche encounters in her personal relationships reflect similar problems within society.

Also like Geesche, Johanna ultimately embraces murder as her only option for freedom from her isolation. Johanna chooses a gun, however, rather than poison, and she murders a public official, rather than individuals that interfere with her personal life. These discrepancies highlight the different situations of the two characters; although both desire to affect change in society, the motivations and methods available to them differ greatly.

Johanna sees no way to create the change in society that she so desperately desires, other than a public act such as shooting an important official. This relegates her available actions to the realm of violence, and leads her to repeatedly seek a gun with which to shoot those members of the old Nazi regime who are still prominently in place in the society of 1958. In the end she attempts to assassinate a former Nazi when she sees him still in an important position in a military parade. This act is the

culmination of the novel, and it illustrates the desperation that Johanna feels with her society. In her reverie, recalling the actions of Ferdi, Schrella, and Robert, she decries the fact that Ferdi did not manage to kill anyone with the bomb with which he attempted to assassinate his Nazi tormenter.

But you might at least have killed him with your homemade bomb; now he's become chief of police. God preserve us from martyrs who live to tell the tale. Gym teacher, chief of police; goes riding through the city on his big white horse, leads the beggar raids personally. Why didn't you at least kill him? With a bullet through the head. Firecrackers don't kill, my boy. You should have come to me. Death's made of metal. Copper cartridges, lead, cast iron, shrapnel – they bring death, whining and wailing, raining on the roof at night and rattling on the pergola.³³

Much of Johanna's desire for revenge is personal, but these issues are tied to what she sees within her society of 1950s West Germany. Her youngest son died with the name of Hindenburg on his lips, something she can never forgive. She tells Robert, "I have to have revenge for the mouth of my seven-year-old son...don't you understand? Revenge on those who go riding past our house to the Hindenburg monument..."³⁴ She repeatedly fixates on her desire to commit violence, saying, "'Mine is the vengeance,' saith the Lord, but why shouldn't I be the Lord's instrument?"³⁵ She claims to be "ready with death in [her] handbag to return to life,"³⁶ revealing that she believes she can free herself only by killing those who killed her son and clearing society of its immoral elements. The extent to which she will go to accomplish this sets her apart once again from her family. She says to Heinrich, "'I want to shoot that fat man there on his white horse. Can you see him, do you still remember him?'" Heinrich responds:

'Do you think I could ever forget him? He killed the laughter in me, and broke the hidden springs within the hidden wheels. He had that little blond fellow executed, Edith's father taken away, and Groll too, and the boy whose name

we never learned. He taught me how lifting your hand could cost you your life. He made Otto into someone who was only Otto's husk – and in spite of all that, I wouldn't shoot him...³⁷

Even the man that Johanna is closest to and who understands her best is unable to share her absolute desire for revenge at any cost, emphasizing once again the form of her isolation that prevents her from truly being understood even by those closest to her. In this regard we are brought back to the concept of one's subjective reality, in which he or she attempts to define an "I" in relation to the "we" or "them" of society. Johanna is in many ways stuck as an isolated "I" within her society, as she cannot reconcile her subjective reality, which relies on her moral values, from the objective reality of society, which functions on a different system of values. Even the groups to which she belongs and with which she would identify as "we," such as her family, her husband, her children, or even the other inmates at the sanatorium, cannot fully accept her as she cannot fully accept them. The difference is that, unlike many of the characters in the other works discussed here, Johanna's inability to compromise means that she will not necessarily attempt to change her position in relation to society, but rather seek to change society itself. Even the other characters in the novel who disagree with the path of society do not care as much as Johanna does about acting on these emotions; Robert passively accepts society, simply withdrawing from it and spending his time playing billiards instead of interacting with the external world. However Johanna actively seeks to change society, both before she is committed to the sanatorium and throughout the course of the novel itself. It seems clear that if Johanna fails to create a change in society and rid it of what she cannot accept morally, nothing will matter to her. This is emphasized by her astonished

repetition of the fact that simply raising one's hand can cost a man his life. She is referencing a Polish prisoner of war, whom she describes as having been sentenced to death simply for raising his hand to an officer, not even striking him.³⁸ She says, "Does it really matter where you live, in a world where just raising your hand once may cost you your life?"³⁹ and, "Keep quiet and remember this: in a world where raising your hand to someone can cost you your life, there's no more room for such feelings..."⁴⁰ The level of despair that this fact brings out in Johanna demonstrates her inability to live in a world that does not subscribe to her strict morality. It doesn't matter where or how one lives if life is so immoral.

Another way in which Böll reveals the moral corruption of Johanna's society is through the failure of organized religion to guide society's actions. Johanna says somewhat sarcastically to the old general that joins the sanatorium:

I can see from looking at you, and can hear from your voice, and smell on your breath, that you've not only tasted the *Host of the Beast*, you've lived on it. Regular diet with you. Listen, new one, tell me, are you a Catholic? Of course, I'd have been surprised if not. Can you serve at Mass? Of course, you were brought up by the Catholic Fathers...⁴¹

The existence of religion does not determine whether or not one acts according to its principles. Having been raised in an upper-class family in Cologne, Johanna would have been Catholic, meaning the religion would almost certainly influence her concept of morality. The very idea of the "Host of the Beast" equates the right-wing nationalists with a religious group by equating the bread of the Holy Communion with their ideology. Rather than taking in the body of Christ, however, those who have tasted the "Host of the Beast" take in an idea of morality completely opposite to the Christian one embraced with Communion. If even something such as organized

religion, which can be seen as a set of moral guidelines for society, fails to create the kind of virtuous society that Johanna desires, it seems that there will never be one objective morality that everyone can agree to follow. This criticizes the Catholic Church, and its inability to actualize a society such as it endorses. Johanna becomes a reflection of the Church within society, as she acts as the church fails to. She represents the behavior of a true Catholic during the Nazi time, revealing the hypocrisy of her society and of the Church itself as an institution. These religious themes are particularly important as Heinrich Böll was raised Catholic, and claims his very religious mother as one of the most influential people in his life.⁴² His parents raised him to respect Christian teachings yet to be critical towards the church as an institution.⁴³ This influence is reflected in the contrast between Johanna's actions and the actions of the Church.

The "liberal Catholic tradition" in which Böll was raised provided him with a favorable attitude towards socialism,⁴⁴ as he learned to celebrate the moral framework and basic beliefs of Catholicism, which celebrate community and charity; however he rejected many of the conservative aspects of the church and its rigid formality. This idea of a liberal Catholic tradition can be seen within *Billiard um Halbzehn*. The idea of society as something human that can and must be changed is demonstrated in the actions of the entire Fämel family, and especially the actions and attitude of Johanna. However, as Robert C. Conrad argues in his book *Understanding Heinrich Böll*, rather than an attitude "which holds that a changed society will change people...*Billiards* suggests the opposite: changed people will change society."⁴⁵ It is this desire to change society that allows Böll to show his protagonists justifiably

committing acts of violence, such as Johanna's attempted assassination and Robert's destruction of the abbey his father built, without condoning it as acceptable in every situation. Johanna's attempted assassination of a military official at the end of the novel demonstrates that violence is an inevitable consequence if citizens are not presented with a societal solution to injustice.⁴⁶ While violence is not the solution in each of Morgner, Wolf, and Fassbinder's works, a similar sentiment is present. One must fight to change society, and each individual cannot act alone.

Conclusion

Through an examination of the texts *Die Hexe im Landhaus* by Irmtraud Morgner, *Kassandra* by Christa Wolf, *Bremer Freiheit* by Rainer Werner Fassbinder, and *Billiard um Halbzehn* by Heinrich Böll, we have been able to track several universal themes: the search for a universal reality in relation to each character's subjective one, the importance of speech and the power both vocalization and silence can have, gender relations and their interaction with sexual or romantic relationships, independence and economic freedom, and each character's isolation. The way in which each of these themes emerges in a work provides insight into the society in which it was written. Each work also contains a similar structure, in which a female character attempts to break out of her world and find a society within which she feels more comfortable. This is a search for an objective reality that she can reconcile with her subjective reality, her subjective reality being the world as she believes it should be. However no character ever reaches this goal, demonstrating that one person alone cannot change society.

In the chapters excerpted in Morgner's *Die Hexe im Landhaus*, communities of witches offer an alternate reality to the East German one in which the main characters live, yet the second novel ends with the witches being driven out of Berlin. In *Kassandra* it is the community of outsiders that forms on the bank of the Scamander during the war that offers an alternate reality, however those who comprise the community know that it is temporary and cannot last. In *Bremer Freiheit* Geesche attempts to free herself from the limits of her society by speaking her mind and claiming her deceased husband's business as her own, yet the only

means she believes she has to maintain her freedom is to poison those who stand in her way. This is an unsustainable path, and she too is doomed to fall. In *Billiard um Halbzehn* Johanna lives in her memories, rather than accept her contemporary society. Her attempts to live within her subjective reality, in this case by following her personal moral code, end with her isolation in a sanatorium and the drastic step of attempted murder of a former Nazi who has retained an official position. This demonstrates Johanna's inability to live within her society if it does not adhere to her idea of morality.

The importance of speech and the power of words is highlighted in each literary work. Irmtraud Morgner emphasizes the power of words in her chapter in which a lecturer is taken over by the voice of a witch speaking about the importance of universal witchcraft. She highlights the importance of speaking and the power of the truth to set one free by showing Tenner's desire to find out the truth about his wife's activities with Laura. *Kassandra* focuses on the power of speech and silence through the figure of Kassandra herself, as she is both gifted with knowledge of the future and destined not to be believed when she reveals this knowledge. Therefore Kassandra's journey of self-discovery is partly one of learning when it is more powerful to speak and when to remain silent. One of Geesche's most dramatic ways of rebelling against her society is by speaking her mind; she lives in a world where male dominance is reflected in verbal abuse, and by speaking her mind she goes against everyone's expectations of proper feminine behavior. In *Billiard um Halbzehn* it is Johanna's vocal protestations against her society that first get her in trouble and

lead to her placement within the sanatorium. By speaking out against what she sees as injustice within her society, Johanna forces herself into isolation.

Gender relations and sexual relationships are also present in each work, and an examination of the portrayal of women must incorporate the portrayal of women in their relationships with men. In the chapter in *Die Hexe im Landhaus* that describes Laura and Konrad Tenner's meeting, Morgner reveals to the reader the expectation that men be in control and not reveal their thoughts, to the extent that it is better to lie than to be seen as weak. The audience also learns from Tenner that women are able to voice these emotions, but for this reason are valued less by society. By reversing the roles of who speaks and who is silent in her portrayal of Tenner and Laura, Morgner emphasizes how gender expectations are detrimental to both genders, advocating instead for a society where each person is viewed as an individual. In *Kassandra*, love and sexual relations are separated for Kassandra herself, and it is the coming together of the two that marks Troy's degradation into a society like that of the Greeks. Those characters, such as Aeneas and Anchises, who transgress gender boundaries, are celebrated, while those who embody the extremes of each gender, such as Achilles and Penthesilea, are portrayed as destructive forces. In *Bremer Freiheit* what is expected of each character is determined by his or her gender above all else; men are portrayed as dominating forces both physically and verbally, while women are expected to be submissive and yield to the will of the men in their lives. To fight against these expectations, Geesche feels she must go as far as to murder those who stand in her way. Yet even her method of murder is one that reflects her place as a woman; her choice of poison reflects the submissive role that women are expected to

play, as she is able to kill her victims by serving them food and drink. In *Billiard um Halbzehn* Johanna and Heinrich's relationship goes against societal norms, as they have a truly loving and reciprocal relationship. The unique representation of this romantic relationship in *Billiard um Halbzehn* is fitting, as Johanna's inability to reconcile herself with her society comes from her own moral convictions, rather than society's expectations of her as a woman.

The works vary in their portrayal of socioeconomic status and the importance of economic independence. For Barbara in *Die Hexe im Landhaus*, economic problems lead to the loss of her children and her eventual career as a marriage swindler. Barbara's relationships are determined by economic realities, and it is only by gaining independence that she discovers that men and women are equally unhappy with what is expected of them. *Kassandra* deals less with economic issues, as Kassandra herself is a member of the royal family and therefore privileged within her society. The reader does see some of those characters that are financially less fortunate, and it is many of these that form the community on the banks of the Scamander that Kassandra ultimately embraces. Kassandra's privileged position within Trojan society is not enough to provide her with emotional happiness, revealing that socioeconomic advantage is not enough to make one happy. In *Bremer Freiheit*, however, the quest for financial independence plays a much larger role. Geesche's attempts to keep her deceased husband's business reveal the difficulties that a woman in her society faces when trying to gain economic independence. Yet it is this part of her quest for freedom that most succeeds; she successfully continues to run the business and removes anyone who tries to stand in her way. In this way

Geesche has more success in the economic realm than her interpersonal relationships. In *Billiard um Halbzehn* Johanna comes from a privileged bourgeois family, yet by marrying Heinrich Fähmel she disappoints their expectations. Her relationship with Heinrich, which is uniquely successful in comparison with the romantic relationships depicted in the other works, comes from her willingness to reject the aspect of her society determined by economics and class.

Each character examined in this thesis is isolated, both from the society in which they have grown up and from others within that society. Morgner shows the reader how both men and women are isolated within society, and emphasizes the importance of moving forward as an individual, rather than a member of either gender. Cassandra is isolated both physically and emotionally; she narrates her tale while knowing she is soon to face death in a foreign land, and her story is one that emphasizes her inability to fit in and claim identity with any group. Geesche is isolated, as she appears to be the only woman in her society who desires freedom from the gender expectations placed upon her, something that no one can understand, and which many attempt to prevent. Johanna is unique again in this case, as her isolation comes not from her position as a member of either gender, but rather from her determination to adhere to her strict sense of morality, which she feels her society fails to understand. Because of this she acts in a way that forces her family to place her in a sanatorium, where she is physically isolated. This act ultimately leads to her mental isolation, as she lives in her memories as much as in the present.

The narration utilized by all four authors emphasizes the isolation of the characters. Both Morgner and Böll use a narrative voice that moves from character to

character, giving the reader insight into the minds of many different characters and highlighting the universality of their feelings of isolation. Just as Morgner and Böll employ first-person narration and shift between time periods, Christa Wolf has Cassandra narrate her tale in a similar manner. Yet as Cassandra is the only narrator in the novel, the reader does not have insight into the minds of any of the other characters; this isolates the reader inside of Cassandra's mind and reminds us of how alone she is. As *Bremer Freiheit* is a play, Fassbinder does not use any of these narrative devices employed by the other authors. However our inability to see Geesche's thoughts distances her from the audience, and emphasizes Fassbinder's depiction of her as a lone character that can be understood by no one.

Within these themes that arise in all four works there are essential differences between the works of the West and those of the East. The works of the West are both rooted in German history. *Bremer Freiheit* takes place in a historical setting, namely Bremen in the 1820s, and is based on an actual historical event. *Billiard um Halbzehn* takes place in Germany in the 1950s, the time in which Böll was writing his novel, however it traces the Fählmel family through generations of German history, beginning at the time of the Wilhelmine Empire in the 19th century. The problems that Johanna has with her society come from specific incidents of German history, setting the novel distinctly within the German tradition. The works of East Germany are also rooted in history, yet the history that underlies both of these works is mythical and not distinctly German. The novels Morgner reads from in *Die Hexe im Landhaus* focus on Beatriz de Dia, a character inspired by an actual female troubadour of the 13th century. However, very little is known about Beatriz de Dia as a historical figure,

meaning that Morgner necessarily expands upon the historical facts to create a fantastical figure. A similar process occurs with the East German society in which the novel is set; while it resembles Morgner's actual society in many ways, the introduction of magic and witches morphs this society into one that is not entirely comparable to the contemporary society of the GDR on which it is based. It is both historical and mythical, as is the world Christa Wolf creates in *Kassandra*. While *Kassandra* is based on the story of the Trojan War, very little has been discovered through archaeological evidence about Trojan society or the war. Most of what we know has come to us through literature and myth, once again representing a mixture of the mythical and the historical. Moreover, the Trojan War and *Kassandra's* story, whatever their historical elements, are not a reflection of Germany's past. Thus the West German works are set in German history and tradition in a way that the East German works are not, a fact which corresponds with their respective societies and their trajectories after World War II. West Germany saw itself as continuing the German tradition, and felt pressure to reconcile its past with its new path. The communist view in East Germany, however, was that of creating a new German society, one which would move beyond its past and traditional German culture. Thus, the use of a German historical foundation in the writings of West Germany and not those of East Germany fits with the ideologies of the two respective societies. It would also have been more difficult for the East German authors to openly critique their society; thus, breaking from the traditions of German history and adding magic and myth to their works are methods used to disguise commentary that is critical to the communist regime.

Another discontinuity between the works, which reflects the difference between the political ideologies of the countries, is the presence of religion. In both *Bremer Freiheit* and *Billiard um Halbzehn* Christianity is present, reflecting the long tradition of Christianity within Germany. Yet the Church fails both Geesche and Johanna; Geesche confesses her plight to the priest and finds no absolution, while Johanna embodies the values of the Catholic Church better than the Church itself, which is instead associated with the Nazis. Religion is also a fundamental part of the society that traps Geesche, and is something she must rebel against as part of her desire for freedom as an individual. We see this in Geesche's mother's expression of disbelief at her daughter's behavior, as it goes against the laws of the Church. Both the excerpts from *Die Hexe im Landhaus* and *Kassandra* do not address Christianity, a reflection of the principles of the GDR, a self-proclaimed atheist state. Wolf's portrayal of religion in Trojan society is one in which religion is determined by the state, something echoed in the way that communism began to act as a religion for many citizens of the GDR.

Yet these marked differences between the capitalist society of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and the communist society of the GDR do not hinder the revelation of a common message between all four works of literature. Each of them can be read as promoting the idea of emancipation for the individual above what designates him- or herself in society; most notably, all of the women in these works are defined partially because of their role as a woman, yet each character seeks to move beyond this and create a society based on universal human principles. This echoes Marx's views on individual emancipation, as expressed in his article "On the

Jewish Question.” Marx argues that, “All emancipation leads back to the human world, to relationships to men themselves.”¹ It is the individual that matters, rather than the individual as man or woman. Human emancipation can only come once each individual defines him or herself as a member of the human species, rather than as a member of any other social designation. This is reflected in the writings of Morgner, Wolf, Fassbinder, and Böll. All four authors demonstrate the limited power that one individual can have if others do not join his or her quest to move beyond the dictates of society. Each individual must work to emancipate him or herself, but true emancipation can only be achieved once everyone has done this, once each person has moved beyond the label of man or woman, and embraced instead the designation of human being within the human species. While this idea is present in all four works, Morgner and Wolf emphasize it to a greater extent than Fassbinder or Böll, within whose works it is an underlying theme, but not a primary focus. This represents yet another difference between East German and West German authors.

Although these works were written decades ago, the themes they explore are relevant to continued study, as many remain narratives of discourse today. The authors of these works promote a universal belief that the time in which they were living was one of hope and opportunity, one in which revolutionary changes could occur. As the division of East and West Germany represented the division of people from the same Germanic tradition into two countries with vastly different ideologies, the literature of East and West Germany offers a unique opportunity for comparing and exchanging ideas. Yet the reunification of Germany in 1990 eliminated this opportunity. Examining this discourse today, after reunification and the end of the

Cold War, provides us with a new context in which to explore these themes, and makes us question how these issues have evolved within our own society.

NOTES

Chapter One: Irmtraud Morgner's *Die Hexe im Landhaus*

¹ Elizabeth Morier, "Socialist Magical Realism: Irmtraud Morgner's *Trobadora Beatrice*," *Complete Review Quarterly: A Literary Saloon and Site of Review* Volume II, Issue 2 (2001): 1-11, accessed February 28, 2011, 2.

² *Ibid.*, 3.

³ "Irmtraud Morgner," *The Dictionary of Literary Biography, Volume 75: Contemporary German Fiction Writers Second Series*, ed. by Wolfgang D. Elfe and James Hardin, (Detroit, MI: A Bruccoli Clark Layman Book, 1988), 201.

⁴ Morier, "Socialist Magical Realism," 3.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁶ Margit Resch, *Understanding Christa Wolf: Returning Home to a Foreign Land*, (University of South Carolina Press, 1997), 18.

⁷ Helen Bridge, "Myth and History in Irmtraud Morgner's *Amanda*," *German Life and Letters* 51:4 (1998): 483-495, (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1998), 484.

⁸ In the original German the title is »Die Heiratsschwindlerin – oder Warum muss Barbara auf ihren Prozess warten?«

⁹ In the original German: »Linsengericht in der Bärenschänke«

¹⁰ Irmtraud Morgner, *Die Hexe im Landhaus: Gespräch in Solothurn. Mit einem Beitrag von Erica Pedretti*, (Zurich: Rauhereif Verlag, Zweite Auflage, 1986), 40.

In the original German: „schüttet ihr das Herz aus.“

¹¹ In the original German: »Nekromantie im Marx-Engels-Auditorium«

¹² *Ibid.*, 23.

In the original German: „Meine Mutter war eine Frau, wie sie im Buche steht: tüchtig in allen Rollen. Mein Vater spielte keine Rollen: er lebte...Das hatte er seiner Frau zu verdanken.“

¹³ *Ibid.*, 24.

In the original German: „...er beneidete mich um mein sorgloses Leben, schliesslich empfand ich jeden seiner Arbeitstage als stummen Vorwurf.“

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 24.

In the original German: „...erlaubte ihm täglich drei, vier Stunden Freizeit. Er verwandte sie für archäologische Studien.“

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 25.

In the original German: „Da ich über keine hilfreiche Verwandtschaft oder Bekanntschaft verfügte und für die Kinder keine Ganztagschulplätze fand, musste ich nachts verdienen. Mit Gelegenheitsarbeit als Putzfrau, Barhilfskraft, Babysitter. Ich konnte nicht wählerisch sein. Ich hatte auch keinen Beruf erlernt. Obgleich ich eigentlich weder tags noch nachts Schlafzeit erübrigen konnte, wenn ich meinen Verpflichtungen ordnungsgemäss nachkommen wollte, stellten sich doch bereits nach wenigen Wochen Versäumnisse ein. Dergestalt, dass die Kinder im Treppenhaus lärmten, Wasser aus dem Fenster schütteten und in Strümpfen vor der Haustür spielten, während die Mutter schlief...Die meisten Mieter hielten sich reserviert, seitdem sie wussten, dass ich eine geschiedene Frau war.“

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 29.

In the original German: „Dreischichtbetrieb.“

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 29.

In the original German: „Er war nämlich versetzungsgefährdet.“

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 30-31.

In the original German: „Ich annoncierte in der »Wochenpost«: »Kleine Frau (35/1,55), unauffäll. Schönh., anschmiegs., schüchtern, möchte einen tücht. Mann bewundern u. verwöhnen als aufmerks., arbeits. Hausfrau, zärtl. Bettgef. u. alles verzeih. Mutter. Nur seriöse Zuschr. erb. an BZ 67983.«“

¹⁹ Ibid., 35.

In the original German: „Das heisst in makellosem körperlichem Zustand. Blaue Flecke, Biss- oder Kratznarben und dergleichen lassen ausserdem auf Vergangenheit schliessen...Von der idealen Ehefrau, die ich vorzustellen hatte, wurde so wenig wie möglich Vorleben erwartet. Am erfolgreichsten war ich, wenn ich mich als Wesen vorstellte, das nach dem frühen Tod der Mutter dem Vater die Wirtschaft geführt hätte und so streng von ihm bewacht worden wäre, dass ich nicht mal hätte tanzen gehen können, von anderen Vergnügungen ganz zu schweigen. Je tyrannischer das Bild des fingierten Vaters, desto mehr Sympathie für ihn und mich.“

²⁰ Ibid., 31.

In the original German: „Alle waren reizbar. Schon das Wort »Emanzipation« genügte, um sie in Wut zu bringen.“

²¹ Ibid., 34.

In the original German: „...brauchte er eine Frau als Ventil. Seine Ehefrau hatte die Bedeutung ihrer Ventilfunktion für die Reproduktion der Arbeitskraft ihres Mannes unterschätzt und sich scheiden lassen. Ich erkannte meine Funktion sofort und nahm auf mich nach Kräften. Wenn die Wutausbrüche über meine Kräfte gingen, leitete ich sie in die Küche ab, wo jederzeit Stühle zum Zerhacken bereitstanden.“

²² Ibid., 40.

In the original German: „Die Tradition verböte nämlich einem Mann, sich einem anderen ernstlich anzuvertrauen. Von einem richtigen Mann verlangten die Sitten, dass er alles mit sich allein abmache. Auch für die viel gerühmten und besungenen Männerfreundschaften gelte dieses ungeschriebene Gesetz. Unwürdig noch heute, wer es durchbräche.“

²³ Ibid., 41.

In the original German: „Frauen, die ihre Männer um deren Stammtische und ähnliche Geselligkeiten beneideten, hätten keine Ahnung, wie an solchen Orten gelogen würde. Selbst enge Freunde lögen einander die Hücke voll.“

²⁴ Ibid., 41.

In the original German: „Frauen dürften einander ohne weiteres gestehen, dass sie arme Schweine wären...“

²⁵ Ibid., 41-42.

In the original German: „Nur Quantitäten gälten hier wie dort als Realitäten. Qualitäten – zum Beispiel alle Spielarten des Gefühls – würden, weil nicht messbar, als unseriös empfunden. Der stete Austausch von diesen »seriösen« Realien führe zu extremer Ausbildung von Rationalität, das Fehlen von Kommunikation über die sogenannten »Unrealien« zu gänzlichem Mangel an dem, was man früher Herzensbildung genannt hätte.“

²⁶ Ibid., 42.

In the original German: „Bezeichnenderweise gäbe es kein modernes Wort für diese menschlichste aller Bildungen, die heute höchstens noch als Weiberressort eine belächelte Existenz friste.“

²⁷ In the original German: „Der Grad des Vergnügens könnte also entscheidend von Geschichten bestimmt werden, zumal in diesem Land, wo die Prostitution offiziell verboten wäre. Also exotisch. Pikant.“ 44-45.

²⁸ Ibid., 47-48.

In the original German: „Die Helden Homers hätten wenigstens noch klagen dürfen. Die Helden der Gegenwart hätten die Ängste zu schlucken. »Immer schlucken«, sagte Tenner puffend...In diesem Land, wo jeder jeden Schnupfen kostenlos beim Arzt begutachten und behandeln lassen kann und Hämorrhoiden und Prostatitis unverfängliche Gesprächsstoffe hergeben, spricht sich ein Mensch, der sein geistiges, seelisches Leiden nicht mehr verheimlicht oder verheimlichen kann, das letzte Urteil. Und nicht etwa nur unter sogenannten einfachen Leuten. Auch die sogenannten Gebildeten, die ständig die Worte Fortschritt und Wissenschaft im Munde führen, verhalten sich derart mittelalterlich.“

²⁹ Ibid., 49.

In the original German: „»Warum Mehrwert«“

³⁰ Ibid., 49-50.

In the original German: „»Warum und zu welchem Ende studiert man Universalhexerei«“

³¹ Ibid., 49.

In the original German: „...wurde er behext und redete in Zungen...“

³² Ibid., 51.

In the original German: „Je grösser das Geschenk ist, das ich Ihnen zu übergeben habe – und was hat der Mensch dem Menschen grösseres zu übergeben als Wahrheit? -, desto mehr muss ich Sorge tragen, dass sich der Wert desselben unter meiner Hand nicht verringere.“

³³ Ibid., 33.

In the original German: „Ich hatte vierzehn Jahre in dieser Branche gearbeitet. Anpassung war mein Fachgebiet, das ich gelernt hatte von der Pike auf.“

³⁴ Ibid., 35.

In the original German: „...Schmutz- und Unfallzulage inbegriffen.“

³⁵ Ibid., 51-52.

In the original German: „Fruchtbar und weit umfassend ist das Gebiet der Nekromantie; in ihrem Kreise liegt heute die ganze moralische Welt. Durch alle Zustände, die der Mensch erlebt, durch alle abwechselnden Gestalten der Meinung, durch seine Torheit und seine Weisheit, seine Verschlimmerung und Veredlung, begleitet sie ihn. Es ist niemand unter Ihnen allen, dem Nekromantie nicht etwas Wichtiges zu sagen hätte...Denn eine Bestimmung teilen Sie alle auf gleiche Weise miteinander, diejenige, welche Sie auf die Welt mitbrachten – sich als Menschen auszubilden. Das ist unmöglich ohne Nekromantie.“

³⁶ Ibid., 54.

In the original German: „Unsere Hoffnung setzt darauf, dass die Menschenkultur die tradierte Gewohnheit, grosse Meinungsverschiedenheiten kriegerisch auszutragen, verlässt und den Krieg tabuisiert. Sofort. Nicht übermorgen: heute. Ein Sprichwort behauptet: »Geschwindigkeit ist keine Hexerei.« Es trifft auf unseren Weltzustand nicht zu...Jäh erforderlich ist eine neue Art des Umgangs, die mit der gewohnten Tradition bricht. Aber normalerweise wachsen Traditionen, brauchen sie Zeit zum Wirken.“

³⁷ Ibid., 54-55.

In the original German: „Die Erkenntnis, dass ein Weltkrieg, der heute nur ein Atomkrieg sein kann, keinen Sieger mehr hätte, dass es nur noch Verlierer gäbe, verlangt uns etwas ab unter ungeheurem Zeitdruck, das als Beistand gegen Resignation vor der übergrossen Aufgabe die Erinnerung an die positive Ketzertadition wachruft...die zu Lebzeiten reichlich verdammt und später reichlich gelobt wurden. Weil sie das Mögliche von übermorgen dachten und auch entsprechend handelten. Dieses Mögliche von übermorgen, das wir heute brauchen.“

³⁸ Ibid., 55.

In the original German: „Der weibliche Ketzler heisst Hexe.“

³⁹ Ibid., 55.

In the original German: „Gibt es heute Hexen?“

⁴⁰ Ibid., 58.

In the original German: „Die Erfahrungen der alltäglichen Hexerei in unserem Land und anderswo müssen unverzüglich universalpolitisch genutzt werden.“

⁴¹ Ibid., 21-22.

In the original German: „Aber leider ist der historische Punkt erreicht, da der Mangel der Regierer nicht nur ihre Existenz oder die der von ihnen Regierten vernichten kann, sondern alles was kriecht und flucht auf Erden samt ihr...da Politik Experimente ausschliesst? Ausschliessen muss: Nach Fehlversuchen in der Politik kann nicht wie im Labor neu angefangen werden. Deshalb lassen sich die für die Weltgeschichte nicht länger entbehrlichen weiblichen Erfahrungswerte nur auf dem Blocksberg schnell experimentell in nutzbare Formen bringen.“

⁴² Ibid., 20-21.

In the original German: „...bedenken viele praktische Gegenstände, und sie beklagen Schwierigkeiten weniger, sondern sie stellen sich ihnen...und schlagen sich in einer besonderen Art mit optimistischen Lösungen durch, eben hexisch.“

⁴³ Ibid., 21.

In the original German: „Sie veranstalten auch turbulente Aktionen, die sie hexische Aktionen nennen. Politisch überlegen sie, grob gesagt, zusammentreffend in Klausur...“

⁴⁴ Ibid., 56.

In the original German: „...gleichberechtigte Frauen neben ihrem Beruf noch eine zweite Schicht erledigen müssen (Ehrenpflicht) und gleichberechtigte Männer sich dieser Pflicht mehr oder weniger entziehen können (Kavaliersdelikt), oder ob Frauen in anderen Ländern gänzlich an Haushalt und Kindererziehung gefesselt sind, keineswegs nur ein Weiberproblem, gar eine Mode, gestern bisschen erlaubt, heute passé, es ist ein Menschheitsproblem.“

⁴⁵ Ibid., 67.

In the original German: „Man muss daran denken, dass Karl Marx gesagt hat, der eigentliche Reichtum des Menschen sei die Freizeit. In dieser Beziehung sehen die Frauen ganz blass aus. Das ist ganz deutlich. Andererseits glaube ich, dass nicht nur die Arbeit, die in einem Betrieb geleistet wird, bedeutende gesellschaftliche Arbeit ist. Die andere Arbeit, die geleistet wird, damit der Mensch leben kann, damit er ein Dach über dem Kopf hat, Zuwendung hat, damit er nicht erfriert – psychisch und überhaupt erfriert -, diese ist eine genauso bedeutende gesellschaftliche Arbeit, eine schöpferische Arbeit, unter Umständen schwieriger, als im Grossen zu wirtschaften. Es gibt keinen Unterschied. Es ist die gleiche intensive Belastung, ob man einen Haushalt oder einen Staat führt.“

⁴⁶ Ibid., 39.

In the original German: „Nach einiger Zeit wurde mir mitgeteilt, dass sich am angegebenen Ort eine Gärtnerische Produktionsgenossenschaft befände, von deren Mitgliedern sich keiner in der von mir angezeigten Weise geschädigt wüsste.“

⁴⁷ Ibid., 37-38.

In the original German: „Eine gewisse psychische Stabilität, die ich durch Bewunderung, Unterwerfung, Gluckenliebe, Selbstlosigkeit und ähnliche nostalgische Frauentugenden als Heiratschwindlerin aufgebaut hatte, fand ich zu meiner Freude allgemein mehr oder weniger erhalten geblieben. Die Klienten selbst nannten diese Frauentugenden vor der Entrückung offiziell nicht »nostalgisch«, sondern »überlebt« oder »reaktionär«. Ich war der inoffizielle Ort ihres Lebens, wo sie sich von ihren ideologischen und moralischen Überanstrengungen ausruhen konnten. Viele Herren gesundeten schon, sobald sie das schlechte Gewissen loswurden.“

⁴⁸ Ibid., 38.

In the original German: „Er hatte die Bequemlichkeiten, die Bedienung durch meine Mutter erbrachte, nicht geniessen und also wirklich nutzen können, weil er sich mit schlechtem Gewissen bedienen liess.“

⁴⁹ Ibid., 64-65.

In the original German: „Ich meine, genauso wichtig wie die Emanzipation der Frau ist die Emanzipation des Mannes, und manchmal, denk' ich, sogar noch etwas wichtiger. In unserer Tradition war der Mann das Geschlecht, das immer überhand hatte. In diesen Zeiten ist die Emanzipation des Mannes ausserordentlich wichtig. Ausserdem, hätten wir zwei Erden, könnten wir sagen, wir haben uns mit Freude ertragen...wir gehen auf zwei Erden. Aber wir haben nur diese eine. Die beiden Menschenhälften müssen miteinander auskommen.“

⁵⁰ Ibid., 69.

In the original German: „Eine wirklich enge Beziehung zu Kindern ist nicht nur eine Arbeit, nicht bloss eine Last, sondern ein Gewinn, der dem Menschen Persönlichkeit abringt. Männer verlieren nicht nur Privilegien, sie gewinnen auch eine Welt, ein Stück Befriedigung.“

⁵¹ Ibid., 89.

In the original German: „Gleichberechtigung, was heisst denn das? Man hat die gleichen Rechte. Man hat das gleiche Recht zu arbeiten. Das heisst, ich habe die doppelten Pflichten. Eine Gleichberechtigung sagt nichts über die Pflichten aus. Gleichberechtigung heisst, man hat die gleichen Rechte wie der Mann, aber man hat die doppelten Pflichten als Frau.“

⁵² Ibid., 61.

In the original German: „Die Produktion einer neuen Qualität kann nicht Sache weniger Leute sein. Diese Frage ist an jeden einzelnen gerichtet.“

⁵³ Ibid., 61-62.

In the original German: „Was ein Schreiber tun kann, ist nur, sich zu ermutigen und zu versuchen, ein Beistand für das Individuum zu sein, das es nicht die schöpferischen Kräfte in sich abtöten lässt...“

⁵⁴ Ibid., 15.

In the original German: „Ein Schriftsteller ist ja ein Anwalt des Einzelnen, und zuallererst muss er natürlich sich selbst behaupten in dieser Welt. Aber jeder einzelne andere muss sich auch selbst behaupten...Aber die Selbstbehauptung ist eine schwierige Sache in diesen Zeiten...Und aus diesem Grunde ist es wirklich wichtig, dass die Leute sich gelegentlich treffen, die versuchen, sich selbst zu behaupten und andere Leute zu ermutigen, das auch zu machen.“

⁵⁵ Ibid., 90-91.

In the original German: „Für mich ist es lebenswichtig, dass die betroffenen Frauen ihre Sache in die Hand nehmen, selber, und sich für die Sache durchkämpfen oder sich Gehör verschaffen, nicht warten – es wird nichts für sie ausgehandelt. Befrei dich mal, mach mal was! Das müssen wir doch selber machen.“

Chapter Two: Christa Wolf's *Kassandra*

¹ Margit Resch, *Understanding Christa Wolf: Returning Home to a Foreign Land*, (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1997), 3.

² Christa Wolf, *Cassandra: A Novel and Four Essays*, trans. Jan Van Heurck, (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, Inc., 1984), 204.

³ Mark Munn, *The Mother of the Gods, Athens, and the Tyranny of Asia: A Study of Sovereignty in Ancient Religion*, (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2006), 2.

⁴ Ibid., p. 56.

⁵ Wolf, *Cassandra*, 3.

From Christa Wolf, *Kassandra: Erzählung*, (Darmstadt: Hermann Luchterhand Verlag GmbH & Co KG), 1983, 5:

„Hier ende ich, ohnmächtig, und nichts, nichts was ich hätte tun oder lassen, wollen oder denken können, hätte mich an ein andres Ziel geführt...Vergeblich versuchen wir, uns ihren Gewalttaten zu entziehen, ich weiß es seit langem.“ 5.

⁶ Wolf, *Cassandra*, 18.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 17.

Wolf, *Kassandra*: „...daß die Liebe, wenn sie plötzlich dazwischentrat, den Pflichten des Beilagers im Wege sein kann...“ 21.

⁸ Wolf, *Cassandra*, 26-27.

Wolf, *Kassandra*: „Mein Griechisch hab ich ja bei ihm gelernt. Und die Kunst, einen Mann zu empfangen, auch...Ich aber wußte nicht, wie ich Haß und Dankbarkeit gegen ein und denselben Menschen mit mir herumtragen sollte.“ 32.

⁹ Wolf, *Cassandra*, 27.

Wolf, *Kassandra*: „Auch wenn Panthoos zu mir kam, mußte ich, um aus Ekel Lust zu machen, den andern Mann, Aineias, vor mir sehen.“ 32-33.

¹⁰ Wolf, *Cassandra*, 77.

Wolf, *Kassandra*: „Ich löschte seine Glut, blieb selber kalt und träumte von Aineias. Ich begann auf meinen Körper acht zu geben, der, wer hätte das gedacht, sich von Träumen leiten ließ.“ 89

¹¹ Wolf, *Cassandra*, 29.

Wolf, *Kassandra*: „Und wenn er auf mir lag – Aineias, nur Aineias. Das war selbstverständlich.“ 35.

¹² Wolf, *Cassandra*, 65.

Wolf, *Kassandra*: „Liebesakten – aber so sollte ich, was er an mir ausübte, nicht nennen, mit Liebe hatte es nichts zu tun...“ 76.

¹³ Wolf, *Cassandra*, 82.

Wolf, *Kassandra*: „Ich sah: Er legte seine Hand auf sie, wie man es bei einer Sklavin tut. Die Griechenmänner um uns lachten ihr dröhnendes Männerlachen. Eine abscheuliche Angst ergriff mich vor der Liebe der Griechen.“ 94.

¹⁴ Wolf, *Cassandra*, 108.

Wolf, *Kassandra*: „Wie Achill sie mit seinen entsetzlichen Blicken, die ich kannte, verschlang.“ 123.

¹⁵ Wolf, *Cassandra*, 120.

Wolf, *Kassandra*: „Wir fühlten es, wir Frauen alle. Was soll werden, wenn das um sich greift. Die Männer, schwach, zu Siegern hochgeputscht, brauchen, um sich überhaupt noch zu empfinden, uns als Opfer. Was soll da werden. Selbst die Griechen spürten, hier war Achill zu weit gegangen. Und gingen weiter, um ihn zu bestrafen: Schleiften die Tote, um die er nun weinte, mit Pferden übers Feld und warfen sie in den Fluß. Die Frau schinden, um den Mann zu treffen.“ 137.

¹⁶ Wolf, *Cassandra*, 92.

Wolf, *Kassandra*: „...blicklos seien alle Männer an ihr vorbei zum Rat gegangen. Auch mein Sohn Hektor, sagte bitter Hekabe. Ihm trat ich in den Weg. Maß ihn mit Blicken, nun, ihr wißt ja, wie ich blicken kann. Versteh doch, Mutter sagte er. Man will dich schonen. Was jetzt, im Krieg, in unserm Rat zur Sprache kommen muß, ist keine Frauensache mehr.“ 105.

¹⁷ Wolf, *Cassandra*, 104.

Wolf, *Kassandra*: „...auf einmal war es nicht mehr ratsam für uns Frauen, alleine unterwegs zu sein. Wenn man es recht betrachtete – nur traute niemand sich, es so zu sehn -, schienen die Männer beider Seiten verbündet gegen unsre Frauen.“ 119.

¹⁸ Wolf, *Cassandra*, 79.

Wolf, *Kassandra*: „...unerhört. Nie war in Troia eine Tochter eines freien Mannes zur Ehe gezwungen worden.“ 90.

¹⁹ Wolf, *Cassandra*, 108, 109.

Wolf, *Kassandra*: „Niemals vorher hat Troia einen Gegner zum Verrat an seinen Leuten aufgefordert. Nie eine seiner Töchter an den Feind um diesen Preis verkauft.“ 123.

²⁰ Wolf, *Cassandra*, 113.

Wolf, *Kassandra*: „Daß man Tote mit Gold aufwiegt, hatten wir nicht gewußt. Doch es war noch andres möglich: Einen toten Mann gegen eine lebendige Frau zu tauschen.“ 128.

²¹ Wolf, *Cassandra*, 227.

²² *Ibid.*, 259.

²³ *Ibid.*, 9.

Wolf, *Kassandra*: „Alle Männer sind ichbezogene Kinder. (Aineias? Unsinn. Aineias ist ein erwachsener Mensch.)“ 11-12.

²⁴ Wolf, *Cassandra*, 132.

Wolf, *Kassandra*: „Das war die Zeit, da durfte mich nur eine Frau berühren. Aineias kam, er saß bei mir, er streichelte die Luft über meinem Kopf. Ich liebte ihn mehr als mein Leben.“ 149.

²⁵ Wolf, *Cassandra*, 74.

Wolf, *Kassandra*: „Die nackte gräßliche männliche Lust.“ 85.

²⁶ Wolf, *Cassandra*, 7.

Wolf, *Kassandra*: „Freudig sah ich sie, ein Weib, als einzige sich bewaffnen, als die Männer von Troia gegen meinen Einspruch das Pferd der Griechen in die Stadt holten...Freudig, wieder in diesem verkehrten Sinn, sah ich sie sich auf den ersten Griechen stürzen, der dem hölzernen Roß gegen Mitternacht entstieg; freudig, ja: freudig! sie fallen und sterben unter einem einzigen Streich.“ 10.

²⁷ Wolf, *Cassandra*, 120.

Wolf, *Kassandra*: „Achill war außer sich vor Staunen, als er im Kampf auf Penthesilea traf...Achill soll sich geschüttelt haben, er glaubte wohl, nicht bei Verstand zu sein. Ihm mit dem Schwert begegnen – eine Frau! Daß sie in zwang, sie ernst zu nehmen, war ihr letzter Triumph...Er warf sie nieder, wollte sie gefangennehmen, da ritzte sie ihn mit dem Dolch und zwang ihn, sie zu töten.“ 136.

²⁸ Wolf, *Cassandra*, 117.

Wolf, *Kassandra*: „Sie kämpfte nicht nur gegen die Griechen: gegen alle Männer.“ 133.

²⁹ Wolf, *Cassandra*, 118.

Wolf, *Kassandra*: „Arisbe: Und wir? Wenn wir auch Schlächterinnen würden? Penthesilea: So tun wir, was wir müssen. Doch es macht uns keinen Spaß. Arisbe: Wir Sollen tun, was sie tun, um unser Anderssein zu zeigen! Penthesilea: Ja. Oinone: Aber so kann man nicht leben. Penthesilea: Nicht leben? Sterben schon.“ 134.

³⁰ Wolf, *Cassandra*, 117.

Wolf, *Kassandra*: „Diese Weiber hätten ihre eignen Männer umgebracht, flüsterten entsetzt die braven Troer. Sie seien Ungeheuer mit nur einer Brust, die andre, um den Bogen besser zu bedienen, hätten sie sich im zarten Alter ausgebrannt.“ 133.

³¹ Wolf, *Cassandra*, 121-122.

Wolf, *Kassandra*: „Amazonen, Troerinnen, alles Frauen. Ein Zug zu keinem Ort, den auf Erden gibt: dem Wahnsinn zu...waren sie nicht mehr kenntlich. Menschenunähnlich, wie die

Leiche war, wurden ihre Begleiterinnen. Ich rede nicht von dem Geheul...Die Frauen, die im Kreis standen, fielen schrill mit ein. Begannen sich zu wiegen. Wurden lauter, zuckten. Eine warf den Kopf, die andern folgten. Krampfhaft zogen die Körper sich zusammen. Eine taumelte in den Kreis, neben der Leiche begann sie zu tanzen, stampfend, die Arme schleudernd und sich schüttelnd. Ohrenbetäubend wurde das Gekreisch. Die Frau im Kreis verlor die Selbstkontrolle. Schaum trat ihr vor den Mund, der sperrweit aufgerissen war. Zwei, drei, vier andre Frauen waren, ihrer Glieder nicht mehr mächtig, an dem Punkt, da höchster Schmerz und höchste Lust sich treffen. Ich spürte, wie der Rhythmus auf mich überging. Wie in mir der Tanz anfang, eine heftige Versuchung, nun, da nichts mehr helfen konnte, alles, auch mich selber aufzugeben und aus der Zeit zu gehen. Meine Füße gingen lieber aus der Zeit, so hieß der Rhythmus, und ich war dabei, mich ihm ganz zu ergeben. Sollte die Wildnis wieder über uns zusammenschlagen. Sollte das Ungeschiedne, Ungestaltete, der Urgrund, uns verschlingen. Tanze, Cassandra, rühr dich! Ja, ich komme. Alles in mir drängte zu ihnen hin.“ 137-138.

³² Wolf, *Cassandra*, 260.

³³ Ibid, 19-20.

Wolf, *Kassandra*: „...und wie wir plötzlich, von jungen Eichen umgeben, vor dem Heiligtum der unbekanntes Göttin standen, dem eine Schar braunhäutiger, meist schmalgliedriger Frauen tanzend huldigte. Sklavinnen aus dem Palast sah ich unter ihnen, Frauen aus den Ansiedlungen jenseits der Mauern der Zitadelle, auch Parthena die Amme, die vor dem Eingang der Höhle unter der Weide hockte, deren Wurzeln wie das Schamhaar einer Frau in die Höhlenöffnung hineinfließen, und mit den Bewegungen ihres massigen Körpers den Zug der Tänzerinnen zu dirigieren schien. Marpessa glitt in den Kreis, der meine Ankunft nicht einmal bemerkte – eine neue, eigentlich verletzende Erfahrung für mich -, der sein Tempo allmählich steigerte, seinen Rhythmus verstärkte, schneller, fordernder, ungestümer wurde, einzelne Tänzerinnen aus dem Kreis schleuderte, auch Marpessa, meine beherrschte Marpessa! – sie zu Gesten trieb, die mein Schamgefühl verletzten, bis sie außer sich gerieten, sich schüttelten, sich heulend verrenkten, in eine Ekstase verfielen, in der sie uns anderen unsichtbare Dinge sahen, und schließlich, eine nach der anderen, als eine der letzten Marpessa, in sich zusammensackten und erschöpft niedersanken.“ 24.

³⁴ Wolf, *Cassandra*, 19.

Wolf, *Kassandra*: „Wie oft ich später jenen Weg gegangen bin, allein und mit den anderen Frauen – nie habe ich vergessen, wie mir zumute war, als Marpessa mich eines Abends in der Dämmerung zum Berg Ida führte.“ 23.

³⁵ Wolf, *Cassandra*, 48-49.

Wolf, *Kassandra*: „Die würzigen Düfte, die Kräuterbündel an Decke und Wänden, über dem offenen Feuer in der Mitte ein dampfender Sud. Die Flamme flackerte und rauchte, sonst herrschte Dunkelheit. Arisbe weder freundlich noch unfreundlich, ich aber war Freundlichkeit gewöhnt und brauchte sie noch. Ohne zu zögern gab sie mir die Auskünfte, nach denen ich verlangte.“ 57.

³⁶ Wolf, *Cassandra*, 98

Wolf, *Kassandra*: „Seit wann ich mich ungläubig nennen musste, könnte ich nicht sagen. Wär es ein Schreck gewesen, etwas wie Bekehrung, ich könnte mich erinnern. Aber der Glaube wich allmählich von mir, so wie manchmal eine Krankheit weicht, und eines Tages sagst du dir, du bist gesund. Die Krankheit findet keinen Boden mehr in dir. So auch der Glauben.“ 112-113.

³⁷ Wolf, *Cassandra*, 133.

Wolf, *Kassandra*: „...niemand verlor ein Wort über mein kurzes Wegsein.“ 151.

³⁸ Wolf, *Cassandra*, 8.

Wolf, *Kassandra*: „...denn immer wußten alle, wer ich bin. Nie war es mir vergönnt, in ihrer Menge unterzutauchen, zu spät hab ich es mir gewünscht, zu viel hab ich, in meinem früheren Leben, dazu getan, gekannt zu sein.“ 11.

³⁹ Wolf, *Cassandra*, 11.

Wolf, *Kassandra*: „Umgänglich, bescheiden, anspruchslos sein – das gehörte zu dem Bild, das ich mir von mir selber machte und das sich aus jeder Katastrophe beinahe unversehrt erhob...aufrecht, stolz und wahrheitsliebend gehörte auch zu diesem Bild von mir...“ 14-15.

⁴⁰ Wolf, *Cassandra*, 97.

Wolf, *Kassandra*: „...manche nicht nur von außen, auch aus sich selbst heraus zum Opfer vorbereitet waren. Alles in mir stand dagegen auf.“ 111.

⁴¹ Wolf, *Cassandra*, 48.

Wolf, *Kassandra*: „...sie nicht verweigern konnten, was sie nicht hatten. Daß sie die Fragen nicht einmal verstanden, auf die ich Antwort suchte und die, mehr und mehr, meinen innigen Zusammenhang mit dem Palast, mit meinen Leuten zerstörten. Ich merkte es zu spät. Das fremde Wesen, das wissen wollte, hatte sich schon zu weit in mich hineingefressen, ich konnte es nicht mehr loswerden.“ 57.

⁴² Wolf, *Cassandra*, 62.

⁴³ *Ibid*, pp. 61-62.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, p. 63.

Wolf, *Kassandra*: „In den Alltag des Palastes und des Tempels mit ihren Bräuchen, die mir seltsam und unnatürlich vorkamen wie die Gewohnheiten einer sehr fremden Menschenart.“ 73.

⁴⁵ Wolf, *Cassandra*, 94.

Wolf, *Kassandra*: „Schwankend und gebrechlich und diffus war das »Wir«, das ich, solange es nur ging, benutzte. Es schloß den Vater ein, aber schloß es mich noch ein? Doch ein Troia ohne König Priamos den Vater gab es für mich nicht...Durchsichtig, schwächlich, immer unansehnlicher wurde mein Wir, an dem ich festhielt, unfühlbare daher für mich selbst mein Ich. Und dabei war ich für die Leute alles andere als unkenntlich, ihnen war klar und sie hatten es festgelegt, was ich war, eine Prophetin und Traumdeuterin...“ 108.

⁴⁶ Wolf, *Cassandra*, 52.

Wolf, *Kassandra*: „Wer würde uns glauben, Marpessa, daß wir mitten im Krieg regelmäßig zusammenkamen, außerhalb der Festung, auf Wegen, die außer uns Eingeweihten niemand kannte; daß wir, weit besser unterrichtet als irgendeine andere Gruppe in Troia, die Lage besprachen, Maßnahmen berieten (auch durchführten), aber auch kochten, aßen, tranken, miteinander lachten, sangen, spielten, lernten.“ 60.

⁴⁷ Wolf, *Cassandra*, 132-133

Wolf, *Kassandra*: „Wir lebten selber arm. Wir sangen viel, kann ich mich erinnern. Redeten viel, abends am Feuer in Arisbes Höhle, in der die Wandfigur der Göttin wie lebendig war...unsre Heiterkeit, die niemals ihren dunklen Untergrund verlor, war nicht erzwungen. Wir hörten nicht auf, zu lernen...Oft aber, eigentlich am meisten, redeten wir über die, die nach uns kämen. Wie sie wären. Ob sie uns noch kannten. Ob sie, was wir versäumt, nachholen würden, was wir falsch gemacht, verbessern...Da unsre Zeit begrenzt war, konnten wir sie nicht vergeuden mit Nebensachen. Also gingen wir, spielerisch, als wär uns alle Zeit der Welt gegeben, auf die Hauptsache zu, auf uns.“ 150.

⁴⁸ Wolf, *Cassandra*, 134.

Wolf, *Kassandra*: „...eine jede von den Frauen am Skamander, so sehr verschieden wir auch voneinander waren, fühlte, daß wir etwas ausprobierten. Und daß es nicht darauf ankam, wieviel Zeit wir hatten.“ 152.

⁴⁹ Wolf, *Cassandra*, 124.

Wolf, *Kassandra*: „Soviel weiß ich: Es gibt Zeitenlöcher. Dies ist so eines, hier und jetzt. Wir dürfen es nicht ungenutzt vergehen lassen. Da, endlich, hatte ich mein »Wir«. 141.

⁵⁰ Wolf, *Kassandra*, 75.

Wolf, *Kassandra*: „Aineias war die Wirklichkeit, und wirklichkeitsgetreu, wirklichkeitssüchtig wollte ich mich an sie halten...Ich verteidigte ihn nicht. Sprach nicht von ihm. War mit jeder Faser meines Leibs und meiner Seele bei ihm. Bin bei ihm. Aineias. Lebe. Den Rückhalt, den ich in dir habe, gebe ich nicht preis.“ 86.

⁵¹ Wolf, *Kassandra*, 134.

Wolf, *Kassandra*: „...hatten sie viele Mütter. Und Aineias war ihr Vater.“ 151.

⁵² Wolf, *Kassandra*, 119.

Wolf, *Kassandra*: „...ich die Todessucht bei einer Frau nicht gelten lassen wollte...Wenn wir geglaubt hatten, der Schrecken könne sich nicht mehr steigern, so mußten wir jetzt einsehen, daß es für die Greuel, die Menschen einander antun, keine Grenze gibt; daß wir imstande sind, die Eingeweide des andern zu durchwühlen, seine Hirnschale zu knacken, auf der Suche nach dem Gipfelpunkt der Pein. »Wir« sag ich, und von allen Wir, zu denen ich gelangte, bleibt dies dasjenige, das mich am meisten anfißt. »Achill das Vieh« sagt sich um so vieles leichter als dies Wir.“ 135.

⁵³ Wolf, *Kassandra*, 81.

Wolf, *Kassandra*: „Aber, ich fleh dich an: Schick mir einen Schreiber, oder, besser noch, eine junge Sklavin mit scharfem Gedächtnis und kraftvoller Stimme. Verfüge, daß sie, was sie von mir hört, ihrer Tochter weitersagen darf. Die wieder ihrer Tochter, und so fort.“ 93.

⁵⁴ Wolf, *Kassandra*, . 58.

Wolf, *Kassandra*: „Nur Paris sprang auf, schrie: Wie! Schweigen solle er? Schon wieder? Immer noch? Sich klein machen? Unsichtbar womöglich? O nein. Die Zeiten sind vorbei. Ich, Paris, bin nicht zurückgekommen, um zu schweigen.“ 68.

⁵⁵ Wolf, *Kassandra*, 59.

Wolf, *Kassandra*: „Ein jeder spürte, ein Maß, das bisher gültig war, wurde hier verletzt. So hatte nie ein Mitglied unserer Familie sprechen dürfen. Ich aber. Ich allein sah.“ 68.

⁵⁶ Wolf, *Kassandra*, 59.

Wolf, *Kassandra*: „Bis endlich die entsetzliche Qual, als Stimme, sich aus mir, durch mich hindurch und mich zerreißend ihren Weg gebahnt hatte und sich losgemacht. Ein pfeifendes, ein auf dem letzten Loch pfeifendes Stimmchen, das mir das Blut aus den Adern treibt und die Haare zu Berge stehn läßt. Das, wie es anschwillt, stärker, gräßlicher wird, all meine Gliedmaßen ins Zappeln, Rappeln und ins Schleudern bringt. Aber die Stimme schert das nicht. Frei hängt sie über mir und schreit, schreit, schreit. Wehe, schrie sie. Wehe, wehe. Laßt das Schiff nicht fort!“ 68-69.

⁵⁷ Wolf, *Kassandra*, 76.

Wolf, *Kassandra*: „Da schlug ich einfach vor, so sagte es mir Panthoos, den Troilos nach seinem Tode durch Dekret für zwanzig zu erklären. Und Eumelos ergänzte, jeder solle unter Strafe stehn, der weiterhin behauptete, daß Troilos erst siebzehn war, als ihn Achill erschlug.“ 87.

⁵⁸ Wolf, *Kassandra*, 75.

Wolf, *Kassandra*: „Ich sagte: Durch die Wahrheit über Helena. Durch Opfer...Zugeben, was sie fordern werden: Daß Paris, als er Helena entführte, schwer verletzte, was uns allen heilig ist, das Gastrecht.“ 86.

⁵⁹ Wolf, *Kassandra*, 91.

Wolf, *Kassandra*: „Mit diesem Schweigen, an dem mehrere beteiligt sind, so lernte ich, beginnt Protest.“ 104.

⁶⁰ Wolf, *Kassandra*, 47.

Wolf, *Kassandra*: „Ein Palast des Schweigens. Hekabe, ihren Zorn unterdrückend, schwieg. Parthena die Amme, ihre Angst offen zeigend, schwieg. Ich lernte, indem ich die Arten zu schweigen beobachtete. Viel später erst lernte ich selbst das Schweigen, welche nützliche Waffe.“ 55.

Chapter Three: Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *Bremen Freiheit*

¹ David Barnett, *Rainer Werner Fassbinder and the German Theatre*, (NY: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 3.

Barnett provides a concise summary of Fassbinder's life and activities in the *antiteater*, so I have used his book as my primary source for these facts.

² *Ibid.*, 15.

³ *Ibid.*, 18-19.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 76.

⁶ Sarah Bryant-Bertail, *Space and Time in Epic Theater: The Brechtian Legacy*, (NY: Camden House, 2002), 2.

⁷ Barnett, 71.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 162-164.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 164.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 165.

¹² Martin Kitchen, *A History of Modern Germany: 1800-2000*, (Malden MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 14; 21.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 350.

¹⁴ Carl Weber, "Brecht's Concept of *Gestus* and the American Performance Tradition," in *Brecht Sourcebook*, ed. Carol Martin and Henry Bial, (NY: Routledge, 2000), 41.

¹⁵ Rainer Werner Fassbinder, *Plays*, ed. and trans. Denis Calandra, (NY: PAJ Publications, 1985), 55.

Rainer Werner Fassbinder, *Das Kaffeehaus/BremerFreiheit/Blut am Hals der Katze*, (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1971): „Miltenberger:...Die Frau, die weiß, wer Herr und Meister ist. Hol Schnaps. *Geesche geht hinaus*. Die Frau, die weiß, was Demut ist. Und doch, im Bett, bei allen Teufeln ist diese Frau wie eine wild gewordene Stute. Die ist gemacht für einen starken Mann wie mich.“ 67.

¹⁶ Fassbinder, *Plays*, 53.

Fassbinder, *Bremer Freiheit*: „Geesche: Ich will schlafen mit dir“ ; „ ...*schlägt er sie unheimlich brutal zusammen, bis sie schluchzend am Boden liegt...*“ 65.

¹⁷ Fassbinder, *Plays*, 55.

Fassbinder, *Bremer Freiheit*: „Miltenberger:...*Er wankt auf sie zu. Sie versucht, ihm zu entweichen, er erwischt sie aber, drückt sie, tastet sie ab. Sie ekelt sich ganz offen.*“ 68.

¹⁸ Fassbinder, *Plays*, 55.

Fassbinder, *Bremer Freiheit*: „Miltenberger:...*Du sollst nicht spinnen, Weib, du sollst noch lernen, wer der Herr im Hause ist und wer die Wünsche haben darf.*“ 68.

¹⁹ Fassbinder, *Plays*, 55.

Fassbinder, *Bremer Freiheit*: „Miltenberger: *Sag, ich bin scharf auf dich.*“ 67.

²⁰ Fassbinder, *Plays*, 64.

Fassbinder, *Bremer Freiheit*: „Timm: Die Frau, die eine eigene Meinung hat, kennt die Gesetze nicht, die das verbieten.“ 80.

²¹ Fassbinder, *Plays*, 64.

Fassbinder, *Bremer Freiheit*: „Timm: Ist das ein Mann, der durch den Mund der Frau erklären läßt?“ 80.

²² Fassbinder, *Plays*, 53.

Fassbinder, *Bremer Freiheit*: „Miltenberger: Die Zeitung...Kaffee...Schnaps...Fenster zu...Ruhe!...Ein Schmalzbrot...Salz...am 31.10.1814 beerdigen wir unsere liebe Mutter Clara Mathilde Beez, geborene Steinbacher, die uns der liebe Gott...Schnaps...Ruhe!...Das Geschrei ist mein Tod...mehr Kaffee...also findet die Köpfung am folgenden Freitag, den 3.11.1814 am Marktplatz statt...Schnaps...Wenn ich Schnaps sage, dann meine ich die Flasche, Frau, und keinen Tropfen...Und Prost...Zigarre...Feuer, ah ja...Heiß...Nur einmal ein friedlicher Abend in diesem Haushalt hier...Ruhe!...Fenster zu...Schon wieder eine Geistererscheinung in Bremen...Ach, man heizt eben einfach nicht so stark ein...Immer wieder geschehen seltsame Dinge in dieser Stadt...Richte den Schlaftrank, der Kopfschmerz...Ruhe!...Die Medizin.“ 65.

²³ Barnett, 167.

²⁴ Fassbinder, *Plays*, 54.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 59.

Fassbinder, *Bremer Freiheit*: „Mutter: Du lebst mit einem Mann zusammen, ohne das Sakrament zu haben, auf das der Christ doch nicht verzichten kann. Du bist den Kindern keine gute Mutter, wenn du ihnen diese Schande nicht ersparst.“ 73.

²⁶ Fassbinder, *Plays*, 59-60.

Fassbinder, *Bremer Freiheit*: „Mutter: Die Frau muß den Gedanken töten, wenn er sie befallen hat. Mein Kind. Als du so klein warst, habe ich dir nicht immer wieder erklärt, was Zunft und Ordnung ist für eine Frau. Du kannst doch nicht den Kopf des Mannes mit deinem Kopf vergleichen.“ 73.

²⁷ Fassbinder, *Plays*, 68.

Fassbinder, *Bremer Freiheit*: „Geesche: ...Vier Monate trag ich das Kind am Herzen und der Vater weigert sich, es seins zu nennen, das ist verzweifelnd für die Frau, mein Vater, da kommen so Gedanken, die man nicht mehr zügeln kann. Da wird man hemmungslos im Geist, da wird das Böse gut, das Gute schlecht. Da weint man nächtelang ins Kissen, und bittet Gott um Hilfe, die nicht kommt. Könnt Ihr Euch vorstellen, wie allein man ist, wenn keiner einen hört, wie einsam, Pater, wie ganz und gar verlassen? Da ist kein Gott, der diesen Zustand kennt und rächend seinen Blick auf eine arme Frau richten könnt. Die Einsamkeit, mein Vater, ist das Schlimmste auf der Welt.“ 85.

²⁸ Fassbinder, *Plays*, 60.

Fassbinder, *Bremer Freiheit*: „Geesche:...Ich lieb ihn, Mutter, und was die Welt spricht, ist mir gleich. Ich will von diesem Mann bestiegen sein.“ 74.

²⁹ Fassbinder, *Plays*, 61-62.

Fassbinder, *Bremer Freiheit*: „Geesche: Kannst du dir Mutters Leben vorstellen, Michael? Nein? Vater schreibt, »in der glücklichsten Eintracht einer zufriedenen Ehe«. O nein, da war kein Glück ein Leben lang, das Mutter hatte. Das Glück, das Mutter meinte, liegt im Himmelreich, denn hier auf Erden, da war sie Vaters Haustier, da hatte sie zu tun, was ihr befohlen war. Da war die Freiheit, die sie hatte, ihr Gespräch mit Gott. Das nennt man dann eine zufriedene Ehe. Weil da ein Wesen war, das niemals einen eigenen Willen hatte, das ihm die Wünsche von der Stirn ablas, das er nach seinem Willen lieben oder schlagen konnte. Das war bequem für Vater, das nennt er jetzt Verlust. Das war kein Leben, Michael, das Mutter führte, da ist der Tod ein Glück für einen Menschen.“ 76.

³⁰ Fassbinder, *Plays*, 62.

Fassbinder, *Bremer Freiheit*: „Gottfried: Kaffee und Brot...Du denkst zuviel für eine Frau. Das strengt den Kopf an, Geesche, macht graue Haare, Falten.“ 76.

³¹ Fassbinder, *Plays*, 64.

³² Ibid., 69.

Fassbinder, *Bremer Freiheit*: „Timm:...Des Chaos ist's genug, des Leids, der Schmach.“ ; „Geesche:...Dein Kind ist über die Gesetze rausgewachsen, die herrschen. Dein Kind will sich den Mann, den es im Bett hat, selber suchen.“ 86.

³³ Fassbinder, *Plays*, 69.

Fassbinder, *Bremer Freiheit*: „Timm:...Ich bin hier nicht zum Diskutieren gekommen. Ich bin gekommen, um der Entscheidung Durchbruch zu verleihen, die ich getroffen.“ 86.

³⁴ Fassbinder, *Plays*, 69.

Fassbinder, *Bremer Freiheit*: „Geesche: Ich höre, was du sagst, und dennoch wird ich nicht gehorchen, Vater. Ich bin ein Mensch wie jeder andre auch und kann mich frei entscheiden. Mir ist im Augenblick nicht nach dem Mann, nach diesem nicht und keinem andern. Wenn sich mein Schoß nach etwas sehnt, wie einem Mann, werd ich mir einen suchen.“ 87.

³⁵ Fassbinder, *Plays*, 72.

Fassbinder, *Bremer Freiheit*: „Johann: Ach Schwesterchen, du bist doch eine Frau. Als Frau kann man zwar vielen lernen, doch niemals Spaß an Arbeit haben. Du wirst dich schon wieder dran gewöhnen, daß nur der Haushalt deinen Kopf erfüllt, wirst Lieder singen am Herd, die Arbeit macht nur hart, verdirbt die weichen Züge einer Frau, du willst doch wieder einen Mann im Herzen haben, Geesche.“ 91.

³⁶ Fassbinder, *Plays*, 72.

Fassbinder, *Bremer Freiheit*: „Geesche: Ach weißt du, Johann, ich hab das Wissen ums Geschäft mir erst erkämpfen müssen, ich habe lernen müssen, und das Schicksal mich so ganz allein auf dieser Welt gelassen hat, ist jetzt...die Firma...mein Leben, Johann. Versteh mich recht, du sollst den Anteil haben, der dir zusteht, ich möchte nichts für mich, was mir nicht auch gehört, doch ganz gewiß, die Arbeit laß ich mir nicht nehmen, bitte.“ 91.

³⁷ Fassbinder, *Plays*, 72.

Fassbinder, *Bremer Freiheit*: „Geesche: Der Mann, den ich im Herzen haben möchte, wie der gemacht sein muß, das will ich dir sagen. Der Mann muß akzeptieren, daß die Frau Verstand in ihrem Kopf hat und Vernunft. Kann sein, daß dieser Mann noch nicht geboren ist, so werd ich mich enthalten können.“ 91.

³⁸ Fassbinder, *Plays*, 72.

Fassbinder, *Bremer Freiheit*: „Johann *schreit*: Ich geh, wann ich will, Geesche, und tue, was ich will. Und eine Frau, das ist das letzte Ding, von dem ich mir was sagen ließe. Und meine Schwester noch dazu...“ 92.

³⁹ Fassbinder, *Plays*, 69

⁴⁰ Ibid., 74.

Fassbinder, *Bremer Freiheit*: „Geesche: Und hast du nie gedacht, es müßte schön sein, frei zu sein von dem, was du gelernt hast.“ 94.

⁴¹ Fassbinder, *Plays*, 73.

⁴² Ibid., 74.

Fassbinder, *Bremer Freiheit*: „Geesche *zuckt mit den Achseln*. Jetzt sterbe ich.“ 95.

⁴³ Fassbinder, *Plays*, 74.

Fassbinder, *Bremer Freiheit*: „Geesche: Ich habe dich davor bewahren wollen, das Leben, das du führst, noch weiter führen zu müssen.“ 94.

Chapter Four: Heinrich Böll's *Billiard um Halbzehn*

¹ Mary Fulbrook, ed., *German History Since 1800*, (NY: St. Martin's Press, Inc., 1997), 443.

² Kitchen, 317.

³ Heinrich Böll, *Billiards at Half-Past Nine*, trans. from the German, (NY: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1962) 82-83.

Heinrich Böll, *Billiard um Halbzehn*, (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, Second edition, 1959): „Johanna sprach aus, was ich dachte; sie trank keinen Sekt, als wir beim Standortkommandanten eingeladen waren, aß nicht von dem Hasenpfeffer und wies alle Tänzer ab; sie sagte es laut: >Der kaiserliche Narr...<“ 94.

⁴ Böll, *Billiards*, 82.

Böll, *Billiard*: „...ich als frischbeförderter Oberleutnant, Beauftragter für den Festungsbau.“ ; „...sie wiederholte es in die Stille hinein: >Der kaiserliche Narr.<“ 94.

⁵ Böll, *Billiards*, 83.

Böll, *Billiard*: „Niemand wagte das, was Johanna gesagt hatte, zu wiederholen; Lästereien dieser Art wurden nicht einmal aktenkundig...“ 94.

⁶ Böll, *Billiards*, 83.

Böll, *Billiard*: „...und sagte nicht, was ich hätte sagen müssen, daß ich ihr zustimmte, ich sagte: >Schwanger, meine Herren, zwei Monate vor der Entbindung; zwei Brüder verloren, Rittmeister Kilb, Fähnrich Kilb, beide am gleichen Tag gefallen; eine kleine Tochter verloren, im Jahre 1909 – und wußte doch, daß ich hätte sagen müssen: ich stimme meiner Frau zu...“ 95.

⁷ Böll, *Billiards*, 125.

Böll, *Billiard*: „...ich nahm mir seinen Degen und erniedrigte ihn, kratzte damit den Dreck hinter den Lamperien heraus, den Rost von eisernen Gartenbänken, grub damit Löcher für meine Pflänzchen; zum Kartoffelschälen war er zu unhandlich.“ 139.

⁸ Böll, *Billiards*, 141.

Böll, *Billiard*: „...du wirst noch sehen, was die Harmlosen fertigbringen...“ 156.

⁹ Böll, *Billiards*, 126.

Böll, *Billiard*: „...er war Otto und war's nicht mehr, er brachte Nettlinger und den Turnlehrer mit ins haus; Otto – ich begriff, was es heißt, wenn sie sagen, daß von einem Menschen nur noch die Hülle übrigbleibt; Otto war nur noch Ottos Hülle, die rasch einen anderen Inhalt bekam; er hatte vom *Sakrament des Büffels* nicht nur gekostet, er war damit geimpft worden; sie hatten ihm sein altes Blut herausgesogen und ihm neues eingefüllt; Mord war in seinem Blick...“ 140-141.

¹⁰ Böll, *Billiards*, 120.

¹¹ Böll, *Billiards*, 125.

Böll, *Billiard*: „Degen muß man ablegen und mit den Füßen treten, wie alle Privilegien, Junge; dazu allein sind sie da, sind Bestechungen: *Voll ist ihre Rechte von Geschenken*. IB, was alle essen; lies, was alle lesen; trage Kleider, die alle tragen; dann kommst du der Wahrheit am nächsten.“ 139-140.

¹² Böll, *Billiards*, 125- 126.

Böll, *Billiard*: „Adel verpflichtet, verpflichtet dich dazu, Sägemehl zu essen, wenn alle anderen es essen, den patriotischen Mist in den Lokalzeitungen zu lesen, nicht in den Blättern für Gebildete: Dehmel und so; nein, nimm es nicht an, Robert, Gretzens Pasteten, die Butter des Abts, Honig, Goldstücke und Hasenpfeffer: *wozuwozuwozu*, wenn die anderen es nicht haben; die nicht Privilegierten dürfen getrost Honig und Butter essen, es verdirbt ihnen nicht Magen und Gehirn, aber du nicht, Robert, du mußt dieses Dreckbrot essen: die Augen werden dir übergehen vor Wahrheit, und du mußt diese schäbigen Kleiderstoffe tragen, dann wirst du frei sein.“ 140.

¹³ Böll, *Billiards*, 21.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 124.

Böll, *Billiard*: „...such dir die Jahreszeit aus, Junge – Advent wird Edith am besten gefallen; sie riecht nach Advent...der Gesang der Mönche wird ihr adventistisches Herz erfreuen und die dunkle Kirche, die dein Vater erbaut hat: Sankt Anton im Kissatal, zwischen den Weilern Stehlingers Grotte und Görlingers Stuhl.“ 138.

¹⁵ Böll, *Billiards*, 238-239.

Böll, *Billiard*: „Zeit wird nicht als Ganzes, nur im Detail verstanden, die darf hier nie zu Geschichte werden; verstehst du?...hier ist immer *heute*, heute ist Verdun, heute ist Heinrich gestorben, Otto gefallen, heute ist der 31. Mail 1942, heute flüsterte Heinrich mir ins Ohr...“ 260.

¹⁶ Böll, *Billiards*, 139.

Böll, *Billiard*: „Glaub nicht, daß ich verrückt bin, ich weiß genau, wo wir sind: in Denklingen, hier, da siehst du den Weg, zwischen den Bäumen führt er an der blauen Wand hinauf bis zu der Stelle, wo die gelben Busse wie Käfer vorbeikriechen.“ 153.

¹⁷ Böll, *Billiards*, 139-140.

Böll, *Billiard*: „...doch ich will nicht ausgehen, will die Zeit nicht sehen und nicht täglich spüren müssen, daß das heimliche Lachen getötet worden ist, die verborgene Feder im verborgenen Uhrwerk zerbrochen.“ 154.

¹⁸ Böll, *Billiards*, 143.

Böll, *Billiard*: „...verschone mich mit dem Kalender in deinen Augen; ich fahre dahin auf dem winzigen Kalenderblatt, das den Namen 31. Mai 1942 trägt; zerstöre mein Boot nicht; erbarme dich meiner, Geliebter, zerstöre nicht das Papierschiffchen, aus einem Kalenderblatt gefaltet, und stürz mich nicht in den Ozean der sechzehn Jahre.“ 157-158.

¹⁹ Böll, *Billiards*, 145.

Böll, *Billiard*: „Tritt ein, bring Glück herein, aber küß mich nicht; zerstöre nicht mein Schiffchen...Wechsele die Optik deiner Augen aus, Alter, ich bin ja nicht blind, nur verrückt und kann wohl lesen, welches Datum da unten in der Halle auf dem Kalender steht: 6. September 1958...“ 160.

²⁰ Böll, *Billiards*, 234.

Böll, *Billiard*: „...ich will Großmutter nicht verstehen, ich will nicht, ihre Verrücktheit ist Lüge, sie hat uns nichts zu essen gegeben, und ich war froh, als sie weg war und wir was bekamen; mag sein, daß du recht hast, daß sie groß war und groß ist, aber ich will nichts von Größe wissen; ein Butterbrot mit Leberpastete, Weißbrot und Kräuterbutter, hätte mich fast das Leben gekostet; mag sie wiederkommen und abends bei uns sitzen, aber gebt ihr nicht den Schlüssel zur Küche, bitte nicht; ich habe den Hunger auf dem Gesicht des Lehrers gesehen und habe Angst davor...“ 254.

²¹ Böll, *Billiards*, 105.

Böll, *Billiard*: „ich würde sie aus dieser Biederkeit, die nicht zur Stimme ihres Vaters paßte, erlösen und ihr herrliche Hüte kaufen so groß wie Wagenräder, aus derbem grüngelbten Stroh; ich wollte nicht ihr Gebieter sein, ich wollte sie lieben, und ich würde nicht mehr lange warten.“ 117.

²² Böll, *Billiards*, 21.

Böll, *Billiard*: „Die Kilbs, das weißt du wohl nicht, wohnen seit dreihundert Jahren in der Modestgasse...“ 28.

²³ Böll, *Billiards*, 147.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

Böll, *Billiard*: „...du hattest mich aus diesem schrecklichen Haus erlöst, wo sie seit vierhundert Jahren hockten und vergebens sich zu befreien suchten...“ 162.

²⁵ Böll, *Billiards*, 147-149.

Böll, *Billiard*: „...wenn sie unten im Garten saßen und Wein tranken: Herrenabende, Damenabende, und ich hörte im schrillen Lachen der Frauen, was ich im gröhrenden der Männer hörte: Verzweiflung; wenn der Wein die Zungen löste, die Tabus befreite, wenn der Geruch des Sommerabends sie aus dem Gefängnis der Heuchelei erlöste, wurde es offenkundig: sie waren weder reich noch arm genug, das einzige Dauerhafte zu entdecken: Vergänglichkeit; ich sehnte mich nach ihr, während ich fürs Unvergängliche erzogen wurde: Ehe, Treue, Ehre, Schlafzimmer, wo es nur Pflicht, keine Kür gab...ich wollte an ihrer Verzweiflung nicht teilhaben, nicht von dem dunklen Erbe kosten, das sie von Geschlecht zu Geschlecht weiterreichten...fünfzehn war ich, sechzehn, siebzehn, achtzehn und sah in den Augen meiner Mutter das harte Lauern: sie war den Wölfen vorgeworfen worden; sollte ich etwa davon verschont bleiben? Sie wuchsen schon heran, die Wölfe, Biertrinker, Mützenträger, hübsche und weniger hübsche; ich sah ihre Hände, ihre Augen und war mit dem schrecklichen Fluch beladen, zu wissen, wie sie mit vierzig, mit sechzig aussehen würden; violette Adern in ihrer Haut, und sie würden nie nach Feierabend riechen; ernst, Männer, Verantwortung; Gesetze hüten, Kindern Geschichte beibringen; Münzen zählen, zu politischer Vernunft entschlossen, sie waren alle dazu verdammt, vom *Sakrament des Büffels* zu kosten, wie meine Brüder; jung waren sie nur an Jahren, und es gab für sie alle nur eins, das ihnen Glanz versprach, ihnen Größe verleihen, sie in mythischen Dunst hüllen würde; der Tod; Zeit war nur ein Mittel, sie ihm entgegen zu tragen...nur eins war verboten: leben wollen und spielen. Verstehst du mich, Alter? Spiel galt als Todsünde; nicht Sport, den hätten sie geduldet; das hält lebendig, macht anmutig, hübsch, steigert den Appetit der Wölfe; Puppenstuben: gut; das fördert die hausfraulichen und mütterlichen Instinkte; tanzen: auch gut; das gehört zum Markt, aber wenn ich für mich ganz allein tanzte, im Hemd oben in meinem Zimmer: Sünde, weil es nicht Pflicht war; da konnte ich mich getrost auf Bällen von Mützenträgern betasten lassen, im Dunkel des Flures, durfte sogar im Waldesdunkel nach Landpartien nicht allzugewagte Zärtlichkeiten dulden; wir sind ja nicht prüde; ich betete um den, der mich erretten, vom Tode im Wolfszwinger erlösen würde, ich betete und nahm das weiße *Sakrament* drauf und sah dich im Atelierfenster drüben...“ 162-164.

²⁶ Böll, *Billiards*, 143-144.

Böll, *Billiard*: „Von deinem Atelierfenster aus riefst du mir zu: >mach dir keinen Kummer, ich werde dich lieben und dir die schrecklichen Sachen ersparen, von denen dir deine Schulfreundinnen erzählen; Sachen, wie sie angeblich in Hochzeitsnächten passieren; glaub dem Geflüster dieser Närrinnen nicht; wir werden lachen, wenn es soweit ist, bestimmt, ich verspreche es dir...“ ; „...ich werde dir weder falsche noch echte Dämonie bieten können, das, wovon dir deine Freundinnen Gruselmärchen erzählen, werden wir nicht im Schlafzimmer tun, sondern im Freien: du sollst den Himmel über dir sehen, Blätter oder Gräser sollen dir ins Gesicht fallen, du sollst den Geruch eines Herbstabends schmecken und nicht das Gefühl haben, an einer widerwärtigen Turnübung teilzunehmen, zu der du verpflichtet bist...“ 158;159.

²⁷ Böll, *Billiards*, 144.

Böll, *Billiard*: „...schon begehrte ich, was ich vor Stunden noch gefürchtet hatte...“ 159.

²⁸ Böll, *Billiards*, 145.

Böll, *Billiard*: „...weil ich mich meiner Vorfahren nicht würdig fühlte, die sich geschämt hätten, aus der Pflicht ein Vergnügen zu machen...“ 159.

²⁹ Böll, *Billiards*, 128.

Böll, *Billiard*: „>Wohin politische Vernunft führt, das sehe ich an dir.< Ich wollte gehen, aber er hielt mich zurück und sagte: >Mein Gott, sollen wir uns denn alle aufhängen?< und ich sagte: >Ja, ihr sei.<“ 142.

³⁰ Böll, *Billiards*, 237.

Böll, *Billiard*: „...hast du dir einmal ausgerechnet, wieviel Pädagogenschweiß da innerhalb von ein paar Monaten verschwendet worden ist; umsonst; warum seid ihr nie auf die Idee gekommen, gleich nach der Gehilfenprüfung oder nach der Abiturientenprüfung ein Maschinengewehr auf den Flur der Handwerks- oder Handelskammer, auf dem Flur des Gymnasiums aufzustellen und die jungen Männer mit dem strahlenden Bestanden im Gesicht totzuschießen; du findest das übertrieben?“ 258-259.

³¹ Böll, *Billiards*, 238.

Böll, *Billiard*: „...und beklage dich nicht über den verlorenen Krieg. Mein Gott, habt ihr ihn tatsächlich verloren, zwei schon hintereinander? Einem wie dir hätte ich sieben verlorene Kriege gewünscht? Nun, hör mit dem Flennen auf, mir ist's wurscht, wieviel Kriege du verloren hast, verlorene Kinder, das ist schlimmer als verlorene Kriege...“ 259.

³² Böll, *Billiards*, 251.

Böll, *Billiard*: „...seid ihr denn blind? So leicht zu täuschen? Die werden euch für weniger als eine Handbewegung, für weniger als ein Butterbrot umbringen? Du brauchst nicht einmal mehr dunkelhaarig oder blond zu sein, brauchst nicht mehr den Taufschein deiner Urgroßmutter – die werden euch umbringen, wenn ihnen eure Gesichter nicht gefallen; hast du denn nicht die Plakate an den Wänden gesehen? Seid ihr denn blind? Da weißt du ja einfach nicht mehr, wo du bist; ich sag, Liebster, die haben doch alle vom *Sakrament des Büffels* gegessen...“ 273.

³³ Böll, *Billiards*, 122.

Böll, *Billiard*: „...aber ihr hättet ihn wenigstens umbringen sollen; jetzt ist er Polizeipräsident geworden; Gott schütze uns vor den überlebenden Märtyrern; Turnlehrer, Polizeipräsident, reitet auf seinem weißen Roß durch die Stadt, leitet eigenhändig die Bettlerrazzien; warum habt ihr ihn nicht wenigstens umgebracht; mit Papp und Pulver allein? Knallbonbons töten nicht, Junge; ihr hättet *mich* fragen sollen: der Tod ist aus Metall; eine Kupferkartusche, Blei, Gußeisen, Metallsplitter bringen den Tod, sie sausen und surren, regnen nachts aufs Dach, prasseln gegen die Pergola...“ 136.

³⁴ Böll, *Billiards*, 137.

Böll, *Billiard*: „Ich muß den Mund meines siebenjährigen Sohnes rächen, Robert, verstehst du denn nicht? An denen rächen, die da an unserem Haus vorbei auf das Hindenburgdenkmal zureiten...“ 152.

³⁵ Böll, *Billiards*, 136.

Böll, *Billiard*: „...der Herr spricht: >mein ist die Rache<, aber warum soll ich nicht des Herren Werkzeug sein?«“ 150.

³⁶ Böll, *Billiards*, 240.

Böll, *Billiard*: „...»ich bin bereit, mit dem Tod in der Handtasche ins Leben zurückzukehren...“ 261.

³⁷ Böll, *Billiards*, 253.

Böll, *Billiard*: „»Ich will den Dicken da auf dem Schimmel erschießen. Siehst du ihn, kennst du ihn noch?« »Glaubst du, ich würde ihn je vergessen? Er hat das Lachen in mir getötet, hat die verborgene Feder im verborgenen Uhrwerk zerbrochen; er hat den blonden Bengel hinrichten lassen, Ediths Vater verschleppt, Groll und den Jungen, dessen Namen wir nie erfahren haben; er hat mich gelehrt, daß eine Handbewegung das Leben kostet; er hat aus Otto den gemacht, der nur noch Ottos Hülle war – und trotzdem: ihn würde ich nicht erschießen.“ 275-276.

³⁸ Böll, *Billiards*, 128.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 129.

Böll, *Billiard*: „...ist es nicht gleichgültig, wo du lebst, in einer Welt, wo eine Handbewegung dich das Leben kosten kann?“ 143.

⁴⁰ Böll, *Billiards*, 134.

Böll, *Billiard*: „...halte dich still und denk daran: in einer Welt, in der Handbewegungen das Leben kosten können, kommt es auf solche Gefühle nicht mehr an...“ 148.

⁴¹ Böll, *Billiards*, 235.

Böll, *Billiard*: „Ich sehe es Ihnen an, höre es aus Ihrer Stimme heraus, rieche es an Ihrem Atem: sie haben vom *Sakrament des Büffels* nicht nur gekostet, sondern davon gelebt; konsequente Diät gehalten; nun hören Sie einmal zu, Neuer, sind Sie katholisch? Natürlich, das Gegenteil hätte mich überrascht; können Sie ministrieren; natürlich, Sie sind von katholischen Patres erzogen...“ 256.

⁴² Robert C. Conrad, *Understanding Heinrich Böll*, (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1992), 6.

⁴³ Robert C. Conrad, *Heinrich Böll*, (Boston, MA: Twayne Publishers, 1981), 17-18.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁴⁵ Conrad, *Understanding Heinrich Böll*, 76.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 72.

Conclusion

¹ Karl Marx, *Selected Essays*, trans. H. J. Stenning, (Teddington, UK: The Echo Library, 2008), 31.

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