CONTEMPORARY AUSTRIAN WOMEN'S LITERATURE: FEMINIST STEREOTYPING AND LITERARY SELF-EXPRESSION

by

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I hereby certify that the work embodied in this thesis is the result of original research and has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other University or Institution.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements

Table of Contents

Abstract

Introduction

Chapter 1 The History of Women's Literature and the Struggle for Emancipation

1.1. The Origins of Patriarchy
1.2. Restoring Women's History to Women
1.3. Feminism in Austria
1.4. Feminism Today
1.5. Women's Literary History in German-Speaking Countries
1.6. Austrian Women's Literature
1.7. A Brief Overview of the Literary Background of Frischmuth, Jelinek and Schwaiger

Chapter 2 The Images of Women in the Literary World and in the Media: Theory and Practice

2.1. The Problems Confronting Women Writers
2.2. In Search of a Common Trademark in Women's Literary Style
2.3. Definitions and Functions of Stereotypes
2.4. The Images of Women as Wife, Mother and Homemaker
2.5. The Media Image of the Ideal Woman
2.6. The Feminist Perspective of Feminism's Its Socio-Political Implications
2.7. Literature as a Political Tool
2.8. The Concept of Patriarchal Capitalism from a Marxist-Feminist's Perspective: Elfriede Jelinek's Michael. Ein Jugendbuch für die Infantilgesellschaft and Lust
Chapter 3  The Role of Women's Stereotypes in the Works of Elfriede Jelinek, Brigitte Schwaiger and Barbara Frischmuth

3.1. Introduction 81
3.2.1. Elfriede Jelinek 82
3.2.2. Brigitte Schwaiger 90
3.2.3. Barbara Frischmuth 93

Chapter 4  An Analysis of Women's Roles in the Works of Jelinek, Frischmuth and Schwaiger

4.1. Women's Roles in the Family, Society and the Church 101
4.2. The Process of Socialisation of Young Girls: Barbara Frischmuth's Die Klosterschule 104
4.3.1. Destroying the Myths of Love and Marriage: Brigitte Schwaiger's Wie Kommt das Salz ins Meer 109
4.3.2. Jelinek's Consumerist View of Love and Marriage: Women as Wares - Die Liebhaberinnen 129
4.3.3. Women as Objects: Elfriede Jelinek's Lust 141
4.4.1. Alternative Partnerships: The Single Parent and the Single Woman 147
4.4.2. The Single Parent 148
4.4.3. The Single Woman: Barbara Frischmuth's Bindungen 159
4.4.4. The Single Woman: Brigitte Schwaiger's Schönes Licht 164
4.5.1. Women as Mothers 174
4.5.2. Debunking the Myth of the Middle-Class Mother 174
4.5.3. Elfriede Jelinek's Mothers in Die Klavierspielerin and Lust 179
4.5.4. Barbara Frischmuth's Alternative Mothers 184
4.6.1. Women as Daughters 190
4.6.2. Elfriede Jelinek's Die Klavierspielerin 192
4.6.3. Brigitte Schwaiger's Lange Abwesenheit 201
4.7. Radical Alternative Images: Krankheit oder Moderne Frauen 210
The aim of this study is to examine the images of women in selected texts written by the Austrian authors Elfriede Jelinek, Barbara Frischmuth and Brigitte Schwaiger and to illustrate the relevance of gender stereotyping in their works with regard to bring about social change.

The study begins with an examination of the images of women throughout patriarchal history and shows that these images are generated by men to ensure their subjugation and reinforced by women through their largely unconscious collaboration with patriarchal norms. It then proposes the necessity to arouse women's awareness to this situation and suggests that literature is an effective way of doing this.

The study then investigates the stereotypes the authors employ to highlight the myths attached to them and to challenge the status quo. The different styles and perspectives of the authors are examined and implicit and explicit criticism is identified. The nature and function of the stereotypes portrayed in the texts are evaluated and the reactions of the central characters analysed in order to ascertain the degrees to which the effects of gender stereotyping are detrimental to women's sense of self.
Although the terms 'man' and 'woman' possess no transhistorical or transcultural meaning or stability, gender differentiation is at the core of all world views and social formations. Yet, in Germanistik, it is not widely employed as a category of literary analysis, despite the fact, that it constitutes the core of much of contemporary feminist literature. Women writers have succeeded in penetrating the intricate network of women's social and private lives and to exhibit, in an authentic and expositional manner, the extent to which women are being oppressed, ranging from the most subtle to the most poignantly obvious. As the relation between the sexes is a social and not a natural one and since women are products of social conditioning, the texts to be studied provide the basis of a detailed investigation into the female life cycle: childhood, education, socialisation, courtship, marriage, sexuality and motherhood with regard to physical and emotional exploitation and abuse; they also highlight the extent to which women have internalised patriarchal norms and the difficulties they encounter, when attempting to break free.

Chapter One traces the historical and political origins of women's loss of power over the past two thousand years and the various attempts by women to challenge both the external and internal constraints imposed upon them. As the authors subject of this study are Austrian and Austria (like Switzerland) is extremely conservative and ignores feminist issues to a greater extent than any other liberal or social democracy within the Western world, it is essential to recognise, that some of the most radical and intellectual feminist writers are Austrian. In contrast to mainstream feminist literature, Austrian women writers, such as Elfriede Jelinek, Barbara
Frischmuth and Brigitte Schwaiger have managed to create works of literature, which neither ideologise womanhood nor exculpate women for their compliance with patriarchal norms. Because of the increasing recognition of their literary achievements, their works are being translated and read internationally, having aroused the interest of feminist scholars all over the world. This dissertation will show that gender stereotyping is an essential aspect in their work, which aims at heightening the awareness of the reader in order to bring about social change.

Chapter Two concentrates upon the images of women in literature and the media. It shows that women are still governed by patriarchal norms and that equality of the sexes remains a myth. In the case of women writers, they are still being discriminated against in the literary industry and do not have the same freedom to publish as men, despite their increasing popularity amongst the reading public. The same can be said with the media portrayal of women. Women are still reduced to their bodies for the purpose of exploitation. Some feminists claim that a successful redefinition of 'femininity' can restore women's power and status and that to achieve this, women must be made aware of their power and the way, in which it is being controlled by men.

Chapter Three provides an overview of the texts to be studied in Chapter Four. It examines the stereotypes each author employs to dismantle the myths attached to them and ends with a brief summary of the stereotypes in their works.

Chapter Four examines the style and perspective of each author, which differs considerably. All three challenge the status quo in order to heighten the reader's perception with regard to the social and political ramifications of gender stereotyping. Of the texts studied, explicit as well as implicit criticism is identified, so that the emancipatory nature and function of the stereotypes applied can become transparent. In the case of Frischmuth and Schwaiger, the criticism is
psychologically subtle, in the case of Jelinek, it is aggressively direct and politically motivated and deals with topics generally regarded as 'taboo'.
CHAPTER ONE

THE HISTORY OF WOMEN'S LITERATURE AND THE STRUGGLE FOR EMANCIPATION

1.1. THE ORIGINS OF PATRIARCHY

When patriarchy dethroned woman and divested her of power, goddesses (Göttinnen) became goodwives (Gattinnen) and womankind was subdivided into good and bad; a venerable, asexual, self-sacrificing Mary and an Eve who perpetrated deadly sin as a result of her being knowledgeable (1). Thereafter, the myths of female sacrifice and subordination have been a product of patriarchal definition, strategically rearranged to suit the socio-political climate of each historical era. Since there are no written records prior to 4000 B.C., it is difficult to accurately separate historical facts from folkloric myths and legends, which have been passed down from generation to generation by word of mouth, modified somewhat to suit historical change. Thanks to the research undergone by folkloric scholars, historiographers, archeologists, paleo-linguists, and so forth, the prehistory of mankind has been significantly restored.

Both the written accounts of early historical figures such as Aristotle, Euripides, Herodot, Livius, Ramses II, etc., and the pictures and engravings on the walls of ancient ruins (following excavations of entire civilisations, such as the Minoans, the Etruscans, and the city of Catal Hüyük in Turkey (2)), testify to the existence of
pre- and early historic cultures, in which women were both revered and feared for their unity with nature, just as man himself stood in awe of her mystical powers. Ancient earth-cult rituals centered upon Goddess worship, the moon, animals and the female reproductive system and celebrated the relationship between women and nature with all of their mystical life-giving and life-taking powers (3). Man's perpetual fear of woman's dominance within the natural realm led to his attempt to dominate both women and nature. As nature represented not only harmony but also destruction it was against the destructive forces of nature that man created civilisation. The more civilised he became, the more removed he felt from his primeval subordination to nature and hence the more order and control he believed to have gained over his destiny. Matrifocal cultures died out as patriarchal cultures emerged, transforming the earth-cult into a sky-cult. Prehistoric mother goddesses were "dethroned and replaced by male gods, to whom the female deities became subservient" (4).

Since the many legends of male power over women were of greatest importance to ancient Roman history (5), historians such as Bachofen (6) have argued that the Etruscan culture (7) was replaced by patriarchal culture under the legendary leadership of Romulus (traditional dates 753-716 BC), who came down from Alba with his men, kidnapped women from a neighbouring tribe and founded the city of Rome (8). Strict laws were enforced upon the kidnapped Sabine women to render them powerless and keep them there. Hence, a power relationship between the sexes was created and men became the life-long proprietors of women. One such law declared: "Women, even though they are full of age, because of their levity of mind shall be under guardianship" (9) and this law in fact remained until the beginning of this very century.

By the eighteenth century, when the bourgeois-capitalist society aligned itself with the rise of the individual and its social constitution no longer depended solely
upon a divinely decreed order, external contraints were transposed into internal ones and individuals were socialised as bearers of social norms. Maternal love became a moral virtue and under the guise of 'female nature', women were burdened not only with the bearing, nursing and caring for children, but also the responsibility of the welfare of their children, their husbands and the state - they became mediators of social distress. Rousseau's theory of women's 'natural devotion', which coupled love with service duties and the repression of their own interests and desires, promulgated that women had nevertheless to be drilled in self-restraint, "so that it will never be hard for them to curb their every mood in order that they may subject themselves to the will of others" (10). Women had become eternal wards (11) - either of their fathers or of their husbands. Marriage became central to a woman's existence and regarded as her main source of livelihood and protection (12). Thus, throughout patriarchal history, women represented little more than tradable goods or commodities (Levi-Strauss), their 'value' depending greatly upon their father's and then their husband's status within the socio-economic hierarchy. Due to their 'levity of mind', women had no voting rights, no civil or legal rights, in fact no rights at all in public matters. Even in the domestic sphere, men were regarded as the legal 'head of the household' and women merely as the executors of their authority in view of house rules and childrearing.

By the turn of this century, a symbiotic relationship had developed between woman's work and its performer and in turn, this unpaid 'labour of love' was governed by principles other than those governing paid labour. A woman's biology had become her destiny and her sphere of responsibility reflected her all-embracing 'natural' devotion, which in turn legitimised her dependance. Women were now also made responsible for the pain and anguish their family suffered and in order for a woman to successfully achieve such a high degree of empathy, her
sense of selfhood had 'naturally' to be sacrificed. It was therefore logical to define woman's 'nature' as passive and masochistic.

No doubt patriarchy had strategically invented the concept of 'female nature' as we understand it today, centered upon love, devotion and self-denial, to safeguard male dominance and to force women into dependancy. These ideas reflected men's interest in having specific work done by women, reinforced the myth of male superiority and filled the gaps left by state welfare and health systems. Moral condemnation not only safeguarded women's compliance to these principles of femininity, but also governed their exploited and disparaged work, which in turn were reinforced by external conditions such as lack of educational and occupational opportunities and the menace of violence against women (13). It therefore stands beyond doubt, that the various images of women as mother, as wife and as stop-gap for the welfare state were all directed at their exclusion from positions of social power.

It was against these stifling and imprisoning conditions that women rebelled (14), first in isolated cases (as recent discoveries of emancipatory literature dating back as early as the 11th century reveal) (15) and then, since the 18th century, as an organised group, although, as the history of feminism unfolds, with differing and at times even conflicting ideologies, which often tended to alienate them rather than consolidate them with other members of their sex.

The change in the destiny of women over the last few decades however indicates that three of the four main egalitarian demands have received a considerable degree of favourable attention - i.e. economic, professional and political equality, but that the fourth regarding women's sexual inferiority remains unresolved. Feminists fighting for women's sexual emancipation must aim towards liberating women from the contrived mystifications surrounding their sex.
and this, in turn, has to liberate them from the subordinate status incurred upon them because of their sex.

1.2. RESTORING WOMEN'S HISTORY TO WOMEN

Two decades of feminist historiography have indicated the relevance of historical study on women for all areas of feminist scholarship, for it is impossible to draw any conclusions about women before the implications of being a woman in a given historical context have been recognised. At the centre of all feminist scholarship is the notion that the relation between the sexes is a social and not a natural one (1), for feminist research in history and in anthropology has shown "that virtually nothing can be assumed in advance about women or about gender relations" and although all societies manifest some gender asymmetry, "the qualities, roles and tasks accorded to men and women vary enormously across time and culture and may bear no relationship to what we consider appropriate to the sexes in our own society" (2).

The discovery that the term 'woman' possessed no trans-cultural or trans-historical meaning or stability initiated an investigation into the changing terms in which women were represented during particular historical periods, into the relationship between ideological constructs and women's real situation and into the complex ways in which women have challenged, acceded to or even justified male power (3). They have reached the understanding, that there is "no simple relationship between women's experience and women's consciousness, nor do women have access to any non-ideological, pre-discursive realm that would permit them authoritative access to an authentic truth about women" (4):

The women of any society operate within the constraints of a dominant discourse about gender, which limits their own actions and thoughts and also shapes their
Feminist literary criticism began as a study of MISOGYNY or sexist stereotyping in literary works. By the late seventies, the topic of women's oppression of their sexual identity had shifted to that of repression of their sexual identity and GYNOCRITICISM (study of women as writers) came onto the scene. This, as well as the study of PALIMPSESTIC texts (an encoded female rebellion discernible beneath apparently conventional literary themes and forms) dominated the literary scene of the eighties (6). In the exploration of language, feminist literary critics (and moreo Anglo-American than German literary critics) adhered to the French theory of deconstruction (such as that of Lacan, Derrida, Cixous, Irigaray or Wittig) and concentrated upon the status of femininity within discourse. Since it followed from the deconstructive argument, that there is no necessary relationship between anatomy and femininity, anyone could write like a woman (in fact most of the great practitioners of "écriture feminine" turned out to be male modernists) and, to the great chagrin of feminists, even read like a woman.

Feminist literary critics studying German (women's) literature, whose roots also began in the early seventies (1974), did not follow the Anglo-American trend of the eighties, but instead concentrated upon the historical and ideological aspects of women's literature, whilst appreciating the utopian elements in many of their works (7). According to Lennox, this has both good and bad points. On the one hand, feminist literary critics in Germanistik avoided the errors of the Anglo-American literary critics and were excluded from the heated debates surrounding questions of theory, whilst on the other, their isolation, in many respects, hindered the development of a feminist methodology in Germanistik. Although feminists in Germanistik displayed a more explicit commitment to examining women's texts in their historical context and were much more critical of ideology (8) than their
Anglo-American sisters, they all "too often imposed categories derived from contemporary feminist theory onto the experiences of women of the past" (9). And despite the fact, that feminist literary scholarship in Germanistik has recently declared an allegiance to French theory, gender is still not widely employed within Germanistik as a category of literary analysis and if so, then without taking into account historical differences or differences amongst women themselves - as if no significant differences divided them (10).

1.3. FEMINISM IN AUSTRIA

Although, in theory, women have enjoyed an Equal Rights Statute for more than seventy years, in practice it has yet to be realised. As was the case in nineteenth century France and Germany, various women's movements (either religious- or party-affiliated) also arose in Austria but it was not until Austria had become a Republic in 1918 (after the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy) that the history of women's rights in fact began to take its course.

It was the Socialist Party, which first touched upon the issue of women's political equality in 1888/89, but to no avail (1). Then, two Viennese school teachers, Auguste Fickert and Marie Schwarz hoped to remobilise the issue of women's rights and founded the first women's organisation in 1893, but their voices became more and more subdued due to repeated defeat. In 1905, the spirit of emancipation was reignited by the Russian revolution and women again campaigned for their voting rights, initiated this time by bourgeois feminists, such as Ernestine von Fürth and Marianne Hainisch. Women's magazines, such as Dokumente der Frauen, Neues Frauenleben and Arbeiterinnen-Zeitung (although, in general, members of the Socialist Party, such as Adelheid Popp and Therese Schlesinger, declared their political commitment to be predominantly party-
affiliated) supported their campaign and in February 1906, the issue was presented before the ministerial committee by Marianne Hainisch, but was again rejected. As a result, a Women's Voting Rights Committee was established, accompanied by its own newspaper *Zeitschrift für Frauenstimmrecht*, also run by Ernestine von Fürth.

Yet, it was not until 1918, when the *Deutsch-österreichische Verein für Frauenstimmrecht* was formed that the issues of women's citizenship and voting rights received favourable attention. Under the SDPÖ (Social Democratic Party, renamed SPÖ after WWII), women gained not only the right to vote (1918) but also the right to be voted into politics (1919) and in 1920 an Equal Rights Statute was declared, in which privileges of birth, sex, status, class and religion were forbidden (2). However, sweeping these reforms may have been, the theoretical implementation of the Equal Rights Statute hardly evolved into its practical application, owing to the fact that only a small segment of Austrian society fully supported issues such as women's social and legal equality, so it served rather to cater for the protection of the family unit (3) due to the increase of women in the workforce and hence the working mother's demand for institutionalised child-and-healthcare facilities.

In November 1920, the SPDÖ was replaced by the extremely conservative Christian Socialists Party, under whose leadership it remained until WWII. In conjunction with the Catholic Church, the Christian Socialists also concerned themselves with women's issues, but solely within the framework of women's traditional sex roles. Not only did they oppose birth control and sex education, they confined women's education and training to traditionally female jobs. Christian Socialist Engelbert Dollfuss (Chancellor from May 1932 to July 1934) outlawed any opposing political parties. In 1933, he banned both the Communist and the National Socialist Parties and in 1934, following the short-lived civil war and not long before his assassination, the Socialist party.
Due to Austria's increasing economic problems, women were ushered back into the home, not only with the help of legislation but also through education. Secondary and tertiary education for girls revolved around their 'natural' vocation (i.e. marriage and motherhood) and included childcare, home health care, needlework, sewing, dressmaking, cooking and housekeeping. By February, 1934 a law was introduced that in the case of any co-habiting couple (married or de facto), who were both employed in the civil service and who earned more than 340 Schillings, the woman had to resign. In the case of a female employee marrying and remaining employed or of a couple discovered co-habiting in secret, an on-the-spot dismissal was incurred.

The government's goal to eliminate two-income earning families (i.e. women from higher income-earning positions) strengthened after Austria's union with National Socialist Germany in 1938. Women were barred from white-collar positions and could not find employment as lawyers or judges and had difficulties in finding employment as doctors or teachers. Moreover, the entire female student population was reduced to ten per cent. Women were forced into agricultural and domestic work and were required to work for one year on a farm or in a private home (weibliches Pflichtjahr). Although during WWII, women were allocated positions normally held by men, they were made aware that these positions were purely temporary. From 1945-1966, Austria's coalition government (the People's Party and the Socialist Party) was more concerned with restoring democracy and rebuilding the economy than with women's issues and the political climate in Austria continued to be conservative. Nevertheless, the Austrian Women's Movement, which began as a charity and cultural organisation rather than a political one, was founded in 1945. This women's organisation was a part of the ÖVP and soon the FPÖ followed suit and formed a Frauenreferat. Both organisations officially concentrated on women's issues within party politics and this, in turn, led
to the introduction of the Mother's Protection Act in 1957 instigated by the Socialist Wilhelmine Moik.

This law (which in essence resembled the one introduced in 1942 Nazi Germany) reflected women's primary role as mother and ensured population growth go hand in hand with women's secured employment. In 1960, women were granted a Karenzurlaub (an extra ten months paid leave and security of same job upon return). In 1974, the mandatory leave was raised to a total of sixteen weeks (eight weeks before and eight weeks after the birth) and women government workers were given the option of remaining at home for another two years without pay but with job security.

It was not until the seventies that an independant women's movement emerged, centered around the abortion issue. After the legalisation of abortion, this autonomous women's movement became much less visible, but had nevertheless:

..initiated numerous projects, including women's research groups, a women's press, women's art and women's counselling centres, a rape-crisis center hotline, all forms of self-help groups, collective childcare facilities, initiatives for women parolees. They all influenced and supported the life situation of at least a part of the population and pointed in the directions in which possibilities of change lie. (4)

In 1972 the Socialists gained parliamentary majority and felt more secure about activating the many changes in regard to the status of women. This in turn led to a revision of laws regarding marriage (1975), abortion and family planning (1975), property and divorce (1978) and equal pay for equal work (1979). The traditional role of the woman as sole parent however remained unchallenged until 1981 when a first effort was made to introduce paternity leave. This law has yet to be passed and has, in effect, achieved little more than arouse public awareness as to the shared responsibility of parenting. Despite the many changes, particularly in the seventies, Austrian conservatism still continues to prevail. Hence "contradictions between
laws calling for equality and the reality of women's lives continue to exist, thereby demonstrating that laws cannot dictate consciousness" (5).

As a result of Austria's increasing economic instability over the past decade, women's issues have once again received much less attention than in most other industrialised countries and the underrepresentation of women throughout the Austrian political, legal and educational systems further reinforces this stagnation, as does the lack of solidarity amongst existing groups of feminists (6). Moreover, the image of feminism in Austria is predominantly negative (7) and, according to Vansant, pro-feminist propaganda in popular magazines and newspapers is indeed rare (8). Austrian consciousness regarding women's place in society still restricts her to her traditional role as wife and mother and has unfortunately remained largely unaffected by feminist consciousness-raising tactics.

1.4. FEMINISM TODAY

What, one might ask, caused the feminist recession of the eighties on a global scale and why did feminists not succeed in redefining woman, when that was one of the major objectives on their agenda? In retrospect, feminist ideals failed to provide women with suitable and effective alternatives in everyday life and women have continued to adhere to their socially prescribed roles. As the history of feminism reveals, women have felt more compelled to fight for social, political and legal equality than they did for redefining their gender.

Due to the controversial and contradictory nature of numerous feminist arguments, which have either ignored or dealt with issues regarding women and gender identity unsympathetically (1), a general confusion was created as to whether the feminist fight against sexism is simply a fight against men or a genuine
fight against discrimination and, as a result, women have not united to fight against patriarchy as a collective. Moreover, the negative media portrayal of feminists as man-hating lesbians and the exploitation by the press through misuse of emotionally-charged feminists slogans, have all contributed towards the discrediting of a potentially powerful movement.

In a thirty-minute interview with Phillip Adams on the Australian ABC Radio, Camille Paglia recently discussed contemporary feminism, highlighting its flaws (2). Whilst Paglia claims to be quite supportive of feminism in its 200 years of history, indeed totally committed to the question of the full legal and political equality of women, she is on the other hand:

totally opposed the superstructure of ideology that's been built up in the last twenty years on top of that agenda and that addresses questions of sexuality, of male and female, of pornography, beauty, fashion magazines, and so on. (3)

Paglia claims that feminism is bankrupting itself by spinning paranoid fantasies of male oppression and considers the monolithic sound of pluralist feminist voices regarding rules and structures of gender-specific behaviour appalling. She is concerned that feminism has become stagnant and claims that it is desperately in need of a 'renewal':

For twenty years here, it's been customary to ignore criticism, because any criticism from the outside is just anti-woman. So, as a consequence, feminism has not evolved at all. (4)

According to Paglia, feminism has become a kind of cultism and, in order to progress, has got to get out of its "silly little pipe dreams" (5) and create a future in which both sexes are allowed to be themselves:
Throughout history there has been the world of women and the world of men. The idea of the sexes getting along, that you would have this wonderful relationship between these two different entities seems to me a delusion. The sexes are different species. The sexes will never get along. The sexes will never know each other. That makes sex sizzle. Sexual intercourse has all the heat from the faculty of these two quite different beings coming together for one brief moment of reconciliation. (6)

Two more theorists are worth mentioning, since they likewise present an in-depth account of the problems of feminism and its subsequent failure: Brigitte Pyerin (7) and Nicholas Davidson (8). Pyerin's analysis, although equally critical, is much more sympathetic than Davidson's, whose book The Failure of Feminism advocates that patriarchy adheres to the natural order of things and all things challenging this are unnatural and unnecessary. Davidson's claim that feminism has made no significant contribution towards women's social status nevertheless contradicts itself, when he acknowledges its various accomplishments (women's voting rights, abortion rights, educational and professional rights). Overall, Davidson provides valuable information and insight from a male's intellectual perspective in his coverage of diverse topics and issues raised by past feminist movements.

Pyerin's 1989 dissertation deals with emancipatory literature for teenage girls, concentrating upon the novel Aber ich werde alles anders machen, written by Dagmar Childoue, winner of the 1986 Deutschen Jugendliteraturpreis. Although Pyerin also acknowledges the many flaws and subsequent backlash of the recent feminist movement (in Germany), she nevertheless applies a mediative approach and stresses that more should be done to educate teenagers on the topic of emancipation.

Pyerin discovered that only very few of the fifteen girls, who had read and commented upon the novel, had actually understood the emancipatory messages behind the actions and decisions of novel's heroine, Christina Hegewald. Pyerin's
view of the teenagers of the eighties is therefore, that they are in general ignorant of rather than opposed to the ideology behind the Women's Liberation Movement. (9)

Although the Feminist Movement of the Sixties became subdued during the conservative eighties era, feminism by no means lost its voice completely. Feminists of the Nineties are again becoming more vocal and together with increasing community support, or at least awareness, feminism certainly promises to make new waves. According to Ruth Sherry, feminism today:

1) identifies inequalities and injustices in the way girls and boys women are treated in a particular society, and the disabilities and disadvantages which result from these. A primary aim of feminism is to work to eliminate mistreatment and unequal treatment of women, at the same time understanding that the exact situation of women can differ enormously in different cultures and at different stages of history. The means used to bring about changes in the situation of women may include political action (to change laws or increase the participation of women in political life); they may also include attempts to influence public opinion by calling attention to the actual situation of women and the need to improve it.

2) asserts the value and the values of women - the human dignity and worth of each individual woman and also the distinctive contributions that women make to their culture. It is in relation to this aspect of feminism that one may direct attention to previously undervalued accomplishments of women (in needlework, horticulture, folk medicine, for example). Here one too may find an emphasis on the social and cultural necessity of activities such as
nurturing, caring for the helpless, and providing others with emotional support - activities generally carried out and valued highly by women. Likewise, feminism points to the forgotten or submerged contributions of women to fields apparently dominated by men. (10)

For feminism to progress successfully, women must become much more cohesive as a group and ensure the education of those ignorant of the significance of the women's movements in the past as well as acquaint them with the ideologies and aims of existing organisations. If not, women will continue to be systematically placed at the bottom of the hierarchy. Amongst the various strands of feminism existing today, the ecofeminists are amongst those in a position to reactivate feminism on a global scale, for, in respect to the universal and cross-cultural devastation of the earth's environment, all existing branches of feminism have joined forces and are working together towards one and the same objective - namely the restoration of the natural environment and the quality of life for people and other living and non-living inhabitants of the planet. This, no doubt, is an objective, with universal appeal, regardless of colour, culture or political conviction. (11)

As far as the 'new-age' Australian male is concerned, feminism is beginning to upgrade its public image, as the survey conducted in the October 1991 edition of Cleo reveals:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Old Man</th>
<th>vs</th>
<th>New Man</th>
</tr>
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| The old man believed that feminists were all man-hating lesbians with hairy armpits, who wore men's clothes, set fire | | The new man knows feminism is really about equal rights, especially in political and social life. He owns an old...
to their underwear and chained themselves to any nuclear reactor or bulldozer in sight for no particular reason. Helen Reddy L.P. A new man will never tell a "How many feminists does it take to change a light bulb" joke to anyone called Germaine.

The 80s 'backlash' Millett warned against and Faludi confirmed nevertheless still exists on a global scale, as the article in the May 1992 edition of *Stern* magazine reveals, titled *Genervt vom Feminismus - Die Männer schlagen zurück* and in that light, the fight is far from over.

### 1.5. WOMEN'S LITERARY HISTORY IN GERMAN-SPEAKING COUNTRIES

Contrary to what the many angered and disappointed historians and literary critics of the romantic and Vormärz era advocate, the more favourable critics claim this period, which has remained largely unexplored to be in fact far richer in the development of women's themes than we are led to believe (1). Writers of the Romantic era brought with them women's spiritual emancipation and can, in many ways, be regarded as models for contemporary women writers (2). Many in fact articulated an acutely aroused consciousness regarding the restrictions imposed upon women in a patriarchal culture and expressed their desire to change them. Rahel Varnhagen and Bettina von Arnim elevated the epistolary form into an art. Bettina von Arnim also wrote explicitly political novels, such as *Das Buch gehört dem König* (1840) and *Das Armenbuch* (1844) and in 1847, she was imprisoned for speaking out on behalf of the proletariat. Both bourgeois writers (Luise Aston, Fanny Lewald, Luise Otto-Peters) and aristocratic writers (Ida Hahn-Hahn,
Malwida von Meysenburg) of the Vormärz period then strove to expand the parameters of belles lettres to include a more pragmatic and politically relevant genre of reportage. As women's literary freedom expanded, writing including journalism was on its way to become an acceptable profession for women. In contrast to their male counterparts (who after the enthusiastic reception of Rousseau, concentrated on the 'schöne Seele' aspect when depicting their female protagonists), many of these women writers applied a rather unconventional approach to womanhood.

They wrote about such matters as divorce, widowhood and self-sufficiency instead of adhering to the traditional model of marriage and male-dependancy, in which the typical Enlightenment heroine displayed such qualities as inate virtue, patient suffering, absolute humility and submissiveness (3). Publications such as Luise Mühlbach's *Erste und Letzte Liebe* and Ida Hahn-Hahn's *Aus der Gesellschaft* indeed addressed social and political issues, as well as those of women's economic independance and sexual exploitation. But unfortunately the revolution of 1848 put an end to feminist consciousness until the 1890s.

In conjunction with turn-of-the-century feminist politics, a new breed of women writers representing a broad spectrum of social and economic backgrounds and hence dealing with class politics directly, appeared on the German literary scene. Pioneers of the subsequent new wave of naturalist literature were Clara Viebig (*Das schlafende Heer*), Gabrielle Reuter (*Aus guter Familie*) and Helene Bohlau (*Der Rangierbahnhof*), who all came from working class backgrounds and who can, along with the socialist feminists Clara Zetkin and Rosa Luxemburg and the winner of the Nobel Peace Prize Bertha von Suttner (*Die Waffen Nieder*), be given credit for their role in gaining women the right to vote.

In contrast to the naturalists were writers like Isolde Kurz, who were still influenced by the Romantics, Hedwig Courths-Mahler, Ricarda Huch and Else Lasker-Schüler who, making a distinction between politics and literature, wrote in a
much less radical manner and the 'free-spirited' Bohemian intellectuals, such as the Countess Franziska Reventlows, whose novels reveal an acute political awareness in her fight for human rights, in spite of her fundamental opposition to the women's movement. In order to fully appreciate women writers of the past and the way in which they have contributed towards opening the doors for subsequent women writers (who have chosen to follow their footsteps), one must bear in mind that the thoughts and attitudes of even the most conservative woman writer displays some kind of aroused consciousness regarding her role as a woman living under patriarchy and hence in a culture, whose values are both alien and vindictive to her sex, even if it doesn't necessarily constitute a feminist consciousness. According to Leslie Adelson, women's literature differentiates from that of men because the authors are born female in a particular society and are subjected to specific, shared processes of socialisation and mechanisms of oppression (4). Silvia Bovenschen shares a similar view, maintaining that the cohesive element in women's literary works is that of their universal subjugation:

Die Geheimgeschichte der Frau, die uns primär entgegentritt ist die Geschichte des Leidens und der Unterwerfung - hier gibt es Kontinuität. (5)

In light of Sandra Lee Bartky's explanation that as far as women's emancipation is concerned, there does not exist, neither in theory nor in strategy, a united feminist ideology, but that the term represents rather a number of different ideologies and activities and if one were to search for a common theme, it would be that of raising one's consciousness and being aware of one's lot as a woman living in a patriarchal culture (6), many contemporary literary critics do not fully appreciate the significance of the historical writers, for these women dared to venture outside their boundaries and create a new breed of women, namely women whose aspirations and spirits stepped beyond patriarchal norms.
1.6. AUSTRIAN WOMEN'S LITERATURE

Despite the diverse ethnic backgrounds of past women writers writing in the German language, all were regarded as producers of German literature. This is now no longer the case. In conjunction with the increasing interest in women's literature over the last two decades and the increasing number of women writers being rediscovered, emphasis is now being placed upon the writers' origins, since their works reflect the socio-political climate, in which they live or did live.

Literary scholars are now drawing distinctions between (East- and West-) German, Austrian and Swiss literature, from the perspectives of linguistic and cultural dissimilarities (1), colloquial and regional originalities and general differences in attitude (2), besides the obvious gender-specific perspective. Amongst the recently rediscovered Austrian women writers of the distant and not so distant past, many were found to have been quite prolific and successful writers in their day, some had even managed to make their mark in literature, such as Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach and Bertha von Suttner, despite the fact that it had been an almost exclusively male-dominated field. But most had simply been forced to stand in the shadow of their male counterparts and were forgotten, once they ceased to write.

A random naming of famous and not so famous women writers of Austrian origin include Karoline Pichler, Elisabeth Glück (Betty Paoli), Enrica von Handel Mazzetti, Elsa Bernstein (Ernst Rosner), Maria Greng, Maria Veronika Rubatschers, Vicki Baum, Paula von Preradovic, Käthe Braun-Prager, Christine Busta, Christine Lavant, Vera Ferra, Erika Mitterer, Gertrud Fussenegger, Marlen Haushofer, Hertha Kräftner, Beatrice Ferolli, Paula Ludwig, Paula Grogger,
Post-World War II writers have perhaps been better received and their works more exposed, having made a significant contribution to Austrian literature. In examining the literature written by post 1945 women writers either residing in Austria or of Austrian descent, the following evaluation can be made. Immediately after the Second World War, the socio-political climate was favourable to the production of women's literature, in spite of the ailing economy. The collapse of National Socialism created a political and cultural vacuum, which invited a search for and discovery of a new cultural identity. For women writers, the release from the oppressive political system, which demanded *Blut- und Bodenliteratur*, therefore resulted in the search for a new identity, in which women were not confined to reproduction.

A large number of debutantes entered the literary scene, producing and publishing their works in magazines and journals, but as the Austrian literary market was not yet developed enough for writers to survive on a professional level, many went elsewhere for financial support. The 'Gruppe 47' in the Federal Republic of Germany accepted many Austrian writers, the two most famous of its women writers being Ilse Aichinger and Ingeborg Bachmann. The major distinction to be drawn between the German and the Austrian members of the
'Gruppe 47' is that the former based their writing on realism, whilst the latter on experimentation with poetic language.

Friedericke Mayröcker, another Austrian 'Gruppe 47' member, who also experimented with the lyrical style of writing, has perfected and retained it as the distinguishing feature of her writing. Of the other well-known post WWII women writers, Christine Busta and Christine Lavant were lyricists, as were Ilse Aichinger and Ingeborg Bachmann (3) before turning to radio plays, prose, short stories and narrative prose. Jeannie Ebner and Marlen Haushofer wrote short stories and novels. Particularly in the works of Bachmann and Haushofer, the portrayals of women play a significant role, but unfortunately their untimely deaths preceded the heightened interest in the type of literature, in which they excelled and subsequently during their lifetimes, only Bachmann received appraisal - and this mainly for her lyrical works. Despite the promise of a new beginning, women's literature came almost to a standstill during the fifties. As Elfriede Gerstl's Spielräume discloses, the anti-woman sentiment penetrated the literary world and very few women writers were well-received in either the 'Grazer Gruppe' or the 'Forum Stadtpark', until after the student movements of the Sixties had had a reverse effect upon the conservative socio-political climate of the past decade and names, such as Barbara Frischmuth and Elfriede Jelinek also began to receive favourable attention along with the other advocates of Wittgenstein's thoughts on the theory of language. The impact of the Women's Movement further influenced the reception of women's literature and writers such as Christine Nöstlinger, Jutta (now Julian) Schutting, Marianne Fritz, Maxie Wander, Waltraud Mitgutsch, Marie-Therese Kerschbaumer, Christine Haidegger and Brigitte Schwaiger joined the new-wave of women writers. The literature produced by these writers again has its own distinctive character (4), which according to Gudrun Brokoh-Mauch, can be defined as follows:
Was die österreichischen Schriftstellerinnen zur deutschsprachigen Frauenliteratur beitragen, sind Ironie, Witz und Humor auf der einen Seite und Objektivität, Distanz und Kühle auf der anderen Seite - Eigenschaften, die die Frauenliteratur der Gegenwart sehr nötig hat. (5)

Despite their similarities, there are indeed many differences in the writers' choice of style and subject matter. Nöstlinger produces children's books (suitable for both adults and children), which deal with real issues and problems in contemporary society. Frischmuth, Aichinger and Mayröcker (as Busta, Lavant and Bachmann before them) create alternatives to escape rational and mechanical realism (integrating aspects from (Judeo) Christianity, ancient (pre-patriarchal) religions, mythologies, fairy tales and legends) and juxtapose them to identifiable, real situations. Jelinek and Fritz adamantly reject escapism and employ literature as a means of uncovering patterns of behaviour and mechanisms of manipulation, for the purpose of destroying them and the myths attached to them, as they consider literature to have the potential to initiate direct political action. Schutting and Kerschbaumer mainly experiment with new narrative techniques, but in doing so they do not evade socio-political critique and thus also succeed in enlightening their readers to the many injustices inherent in contemporary Austrian society. Schwaiger and Haidegger mainly produce works, in which social criticism from a woman's perspective plays a significant role. Schwaiger, Frischmuth and Jelinek also produce radio plays and stage plays, and children's books, all of outstanding quality, but it is mainly their narrative prose, for which they are known, although in Jelinek's case, it is her work for the stage, that creates even greater controversy than her narrative prose.
1.7. A BRIEF OUTLINE OF THE LITERARY BACKGROUND OF FRISCHMUTH, JELINEK AND SCHWAIGER

Barbara Frischmuth, Elfriede Jelinek and Brigitte Schwaiger were all born in Austria in the 1940s and belong to the post-sixties generation of women writers writing with a feminist consciousness. Both Frischmuth (born 1941) and Jelinek (born 1946) began writing in the sixties and completed their first work in 1968, one year after the dissolution of the GRUPPE 47 and the same year of the onset of the 'experimental' phase in Austrian literature. Brigitte Schwaiger (born 1949) is the youngest of the three and did not make her literary debut until 1977, almost a decade later.

Although Frischmuth's *Klosterschule* (1968) and Jelinek's *bukolit* (written in 1968, but not published until 1979) and *Wir sind lockvögel, baby!* (1970) are in every sense a rigorous adaptation of the language scepticism during that era (1968-1974), they still differ considerably in style (1). Frischmuth's *Klosterschule* is not nearly as experimental as Jelinek's two texts, but lies more in the vein of Musil's *Törless*, Hesse's *Unterm Rad* or Wedekind's *Frühlings Erwachen* (2) and, although her blatant exposition of a young girl's experiences in a convent school aroused much controversy and hailed her champion of the European Youth Movement, Frischmuth's style is much more subtle and also easier to read. Jelinek, on the other hand, intends to be radical in her satirical attack upon the trivial world of the media, the press, the television and pop and drug cultures, as she exposes the brutality and the crippling effects of a powerful social 'superego' upon the powerless and ignorant majority (3).

The next works to be published by Jelinek and Frischmuth are Jelinek's *Michael. Ein Jugendbuch für die Infantilgesellschaft* (1972) and Frischmuth's *Das Verschwinden des Schattens in der Sonne* (1973). In contrast to their earlier works, these texts are more fluid and consistant by way of language and subject
matter, although, once again, Jelinek's to a lesser degree (4). Jelinek's literary
technique is based upon the Jewish tradition of using irony and satire to magnify
specific issues she wishes to raise (5). In Michael. Ein Jugendbuch für die
Infantilgesellschaft, Jelinek criticises the conscious, deliberate manipulation of the
masses through the illusionary world of television and glossy magazines, whereby
the idyllic world of the rich (minority) blinds the poor (majority), maintaining them
in an infantile state. Frischmuth's Das Verschwinden des Schattens in der Sonne
is believed by many to be her finest work, both in language and technique. It is the
story of an adaptation (6), but unlike in Die Klosterschule, the heroine in this novel
wants to conform and persistently attempts to be accepted into a culture, from
which she is excluded because she is a foreigner (7).

In the second stage of Jelinek's and Frischmuth's literary development, they
produce a feminist text - Frischmuth, Haschen nach Wind (1974) and Jelinek, Die
Liebhaberinnen (1975). These two texts belong to the first wave of neo-feminist
literature from German-speaking countries (8), yet they differ from the texts written
by German feminist writers because of their objective rather than subjective
narrative style (9). All four stories in Frischmuth's Haschen nach Wind are dead-
end tales (10) and Frischmuth provides no solutions to any of the four protagonist's
psychological dilemmas, but instead provides a realistic portrayal of four different
kinds of lifestyles and situations, to which her female readers can easily relate or
perhaps even discover themselves.

Jelinek's Die Liebhaberinnen emits the 'eisige Kälte' of its author [L, 71] and it
is the only text of its day, which does not exculpate women, but declares them
equally culpable for their dilemma (11). Again Jelinek uses irony and satire to
destroy popular myths and expose false ideologies in her portrayal of two women,
who sell their bodies for the material comforts and security of marriage. Although
in the text, Brigitte is said to be the good example and Paula the bad, neither one in
fact sets a good example and the term itself is meant to be ironic. Whereas Frischmuth's *Haschen nach Wind* explores psychological dimensions, Jelinek's *Die Liebhaberinnen* explores the social dimensions of failed male-female relationships.

In 1976, the first part of Frischmuth's trilogy, *Die Mystifikation der Sophie Silber* and in 1977 Brigitte Schwaiger's debut novel *Wie kommt das Salz ins Meer* entered the literary arena, the latter of which proved to become a phenomenal success. To eliminate any tone of lamentation and replace it with snotty humour, Schwaiger had written and rewritten her novel for five years before having it published. (12) Although this work is autobiographical, it also differs from the autobiographical works of German feminist writers because of its penetrating view (13). In retrospect of her own failed marriage, Schwaiger allows her critical distance and detached objectivity to set the tone for her first-person account of a marriage, from its ceremonial beginnings to its judicial dissolution, making her own case into an exemplary one (14).

The following year Schwaiger's *Mein spanisches Dorf* (1978) was published, as were the second and third parts of Frischmuth's trilogy, *Amy und die Metamorphose* (1978) and *Kai und die Liebe zu den Modellen* (1979). The reviews for parts one and two of the trilogy were not always good, as many critics considered her integration of the fantastic into the realistic to be a failure (15). The final part of the trilogy, *Kai und die Liebe zu den Modellen* was well-received, which evoked feminist literary scholars to rediscover *Die Klosterschule* that same year (16). Nevertheless, the more favourable critics, such as Pamela Saur, consider all three volumes to be well-written:

As a contribution to feminist literature, Frischmuth's trilogy is an ambitious and strikingly complete Bildungsroman. While some feminist social and literary issues are well developed, others more briefly introduced, probably every major question or problem is at least presented. Major and minor women characters explore the vast terrain of human life, including the exercises of the imagination and fantasy, artistic creation, vocational development and various personal relationships and living arrangements. At the same time, they experience a range of limitations on their
choices, many of them created by their position as women in a male-dominated society... The trilogy calls our cultural heritage into question by creating a new mythology, demonstrating the possibility of a cultural change, new interpretations of form, such as literary genres and a new literary creation including women more fully in literary presentations of human experience... Frischmuth’s breadth of vision is reflected in the fact that the trilogy focuses not only on the genuine problems of her relatively privileged protagonists, but also on the struggles of working-class waitresses, housewives and Turkish families living in Vienna. (17)

Indeed, the real and the fantastic are united by the theme of women’s emancipation and by an ideal, that women must play a greater and more important role in society, in order to alter the course of the world. In addition to honouring the power of women to transcend traditional boundaries without betraying the realities of their experiences in motherhood, domesticity and personal relations, Frischmuth explores the role of nature as a refuge and source of strength for women and validates women’s friendships (18).

In contrast to the first two volumes, which are third person narratives, Kai und die Liebe zu den Modellen is written from the perspective of a first- person narrator and concentrates on the issue of educating children, in order to attain a changed and improved future society. In that light, the entire trilogy advocates Hofmannsthal’s idea of conservative revolution. Again, Frischmuth interweaves the fantastic, although on a much more subtle level and it composes one of the novel’s two major themes, the first of which relates the strained relationship between Amy, Kai and Klemens and the second, the magical games the children play in the ‘green world’ of the City Park, Kai being the connecting link.

Two years after Mein Spanisches Dorf, Brigitte Schwaiger’s Lange Abwesenheit (1980) again followed the trend of the second phase of Austrian literature (1975-1980), this time relating the story of the author’s failed relationship to her father. In contrast to her first two works, Schwaiger injects a tragic note into this work of literature (19), as she relates the story of a young woman’s failed attempt to get reconciled with her father after his death, which in turn can be
politicised as a woman's failed attempt to find her identity in a misogynist world: "Vater, wir liegen so schlecht miteinander" [LA, 124].

Since the beginning of the eighties, all three authors have taken on a new literary direction. Schwaiger and Frischmuth disguise the autobiographical elements in their works and Jelinek's characters come to life (20). Jelinek's *Die Ausgesperrten* (1980) ventures back into the fifties and is based upon the true story of a young boy, who massacres his family in cold blood. Yet as before, Jelinek is not interested in the plight of the individual, but in exposing prevailing social conditions, which cause the psychological dilemma of her protagonist. Jelinek counterbalances the existentialist philosophy prevalent in the fifties with the socially disadvantaged position of her protagonist, for whom individual freedom is not possible until some drastic measure is taken, to single him out from the others (21).

In 1983 Jelinek touches upon autobiographical material for the first (and to date only) time in *Die Klavierspielerin*, but this too is depersonalised through use of an impartial third person narrator, whose ironic tone of detachment destroys any identification with the heroine. Like in *Die Ausgesperrten*, the heroine of this novel has also acquired flesh and blood, but again Jelinek does not evoke sympathy but awareness in her readers with regard to the underlying socio-political forces that destroy her heroine's attempts at individualisation. In her more recent works, *Oh Wildnis, Oh Schutz vor ihr* (1985), *Krankheit oder Moderne Frauen* (1987), *Lust* (1989) and *Wolken. Heim* (1990), Jelinek juxtaposes the power relations between people to that between man and nature, poignantly contextualising man's drive to dominate and destroy all that is nature-bound. Jelinek's works become more complex with each text and her method of deconstruction more sophisticated and intellectual. In *Lust* and *Wolken. Heim*, Hölderlin runs as the main subtext and is touched upon in her latest and most difficult literary work, *Totenauberg*, as is Heidegger (22). The oftentimes unfavourable reception of her works by German
literary critics can be attributed to reasons, which are best expressed in an interview by the author herself:

Meine literarische Technik liegt in der Negativität, in einer satirischen Beugung der Wirklichkeit und im Auf-die-Spitze-Treiben des Wirklichen...Und Satire ist ja sozialisierte Aggression, ästhetischer Haß in der Tradition der Wiener Gruppe und auch der jüdischen Tradition des Denkens etwa eines Karl Kraus....Es gibt hier eigentlich überhaupt keine Rezeption dafür, weil die jüdische Kultur vernichtet ist, und daher hat auch diese Form der Sprachkritik in der Sprache selbst keine Rezeption mehr....Es gibt in der deutschen Literatur ja keinen Witz. (23)

Frischmuth's latest works, such as *Bindungen* (1980), *Die Ferienfamilie* (1981), *Die Frau im Mond* (1982), *Kopftänzer* (1984) and *Über die Verhältnisse* (1987) continue in the same vein as her earlier works, revolving around the problems professional women face, when attempting to balance their personal, social and professional lives and retain their identity. The heroines of these texts all lead unconventional lifestyles and hence project alternative images of women with a heightened sense of awareness and the ability to find definite and concrete solutions to the various problems they encounter. In turn, the assertiveness apparent in Frischmuth's heroines reflects itself in her new mastery of literary style and technique (24).

In *Die Galizianerin* (1982), Schwaiger disappears behind the voice and lifestyle of another and, as Jelinek does in *Die Ausgesperrten*, recreates history. As the compassionate and sympathetic medium between the protagonist, Eva Deutsch and the reader, Schwaiger relates the story of a Polish Jewess' battle for survival during the Third Reich. Both in content and in style (Schwaiger emulates the Galician dialect), this novel has been very well-received (25). Her latest works, *Liebersversuche* (1989) and *Schönes Licht* (1990) are also written in third person. Whilst the former is a collection of short stories (26), the latter conceals the autobiographical elements apparent in her earlier works behind a narrator's voice. Like Frischmuth, Schwaiger's literary expression has also become more fluid and
structured and her narrator more mature, but the 'bite' of her earlier works, which was indeed her strength and possible reason for her phenomenal success, is now no longer detectable.

All three authors thus consciously criticise the patriarchal social order from a different perspective, all of which are nevertheless reflections of their generation. The literary development of each author varies in style, form and language and yet the overall stages of their development coincide. Frischmuth began with a general criticism of patriarchal authority, narrowed it down to personal criticism from a feminist perspective and then developed it into a more polished style of answering specific questions of what it means to be a woman living in a patriarchal culture, as well as present her readers with viable alternatives, allowing her heroines to take an active part in changing women's roles. The only remaining criticism of Frischmuth's texts by literary scholars is that of her simplistic portrayal of male characters, but since Frischmuth specifically deals with the position of women in society, this is self-explanatory. While the theme of nature plays a major role throughout her works, that of religion is only addressed in *Die Klosterschule*.

In spite of the diversity of Jelinek's literary texts, which, as mentioned earlier, have become more complex, both in structure and in content, her rage against society remains evident throughout all of her works. Schwaiger, on the other hand, who began writing one decade after Jelinek and Frischmuth, undergoes one definite change in literary direction, namely that of shifting from first to third person narration and in doing so, also deals with issues that stand outside personal experience.
FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER ONE

1.1. Origins of Patriarchy


3) J. Blair, "Women's Self-Concept and Belief. A Feminist Approach to Empowerment Symbolism." In: *Women's Studies Int. Forum*, Vol. 8, No.4, 1855, p. 302: "It did not feel like a coincidence that- Jaweh or Allah has inspired Moses and Mohammed with the ideal of one male godhead to stamp out all the infidel practices of the fertility rites of the agriculturalist matrilineal societies, and that the names of false gods were so often female gods...It did not seem coincidental that the shared God of Christians, Muslims and Jews had punished his children and sent them out of the Garden of Eden because they had invented Knowledge with the words meaning Male and Female, and cursed them, sentenced them to their separate labours: the labour and burden of bearing and bringing forth children; and the labour and burden of working by the sweat of their brow to till the land and bring forth its products. With this punishment the shared world of Eden was divided into two separate worlds of ideals and purposes with their different rewards and punishments: the accumulation of products by which one man could measure his worth against another; and his wife whose life and worth could be measured by her fruitfulness and usefulness to him as producer of children, products and wealth".


5) Ibid., p. 55.

6) R. Fester, "Frauenherrschaften in aller Welt." In *Weib und Macht. Fünf Millionen Jahre Urgeschichte der Frau*, (Fischer, Frankfurt/M., 1979), p. 45, refers to Bachofen's research into prehistoric matrilineal cultures and claims, that whilst Bachofen can on the one hand be justly acknowledged as "der größte Erschließer eines urzeitlichen Bewußtstauandes" for his initial discoveries and research into early matrilineal cultures (Tibet, Crete, Lemnos, Egypt, Athens, Central Asia, India, Elis, Lochris, etc.), he was on the other hand handicapped by the limited scientific and technological advances of the mid 1800s and hence was not even aware of such later discoveries, as the cave paintings dating back to the Ice Age. Furthermore, the Athenians, the Israelites and the Chinese had become patriarchal cultures quite some time before the Romans. (Fester refers to Robert Graves in *Mammon and the Black Goddess*, pp. 145, 146, who speculates that the transformation from female to male deities in the Greek World took place shortly before the 8th Century B.C.)

7) The argument with regard to ancient matriarchal cultures (as postulated by Heide Götter-Abendroth) is purely speculative, as C. Paglia maintains in
her book *Sexual Personae. Art and Decadence from Nefertiti to Emily Dickinson*, p.8, and has not been proven correct to date.

8) C. Battersby, *Gender and Genius*, p. 54

9) Ibid., p. 54.

10) Ibid., p. 82.

11) Ibid., p. 82: Many 18th and 19th century women writers (such as Virginia Woolf) expressed their indignation with regard to the status of women as being "eternal wards".

12) Themes along this line of reasoning are prominent throughout Western Literature - from Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew* to Jelinek's *Die Liebhaberinnen*. R. Sherry in *Studying Women's Writing*, p. 50, summarises the problem of women's financial situation as follows: "Very few women were economically independant, as money and property tended to descend to men...working class women, while scarcely secure economically, usually kept body and soul together by functioning as domestic servants, but middle and upper-class women had very limited opportunities to achieve financial autonomy by their own efforts. In the upper classes there was usually enough money to go round, so that an unmarried woman was not an unbearable burden on the family's finances, but in the middle classes she could be a real financial problem." Wenzels' survey indicates another major reason for women wanting to marry is that of guarding against loneliness and isolation in their later years. See A. Wenzel, *Heutiges Deutsch - Der ideologische Charakter von Stereotypen*, (Max Hueber, München, 1978) pp. 42-43.

13) L. Haas, p. 337.

14) J. Blair, p. 323, explains that the term "emancipation" is derived from the latin "emancipatio", meaning the formal liberation of a family member from the power of the father under the Roman Law. Still today, it is a predominantly POLITICAL term, applied in reference to specific groups of oppressed peoples, such as Jews, Negroes, slaves and women, and it has come to mean equal rights... "Freedom for women has a different meaning than emancipation, reclaiming our bodies for ourselves and shaping our future to our purpose. Freedom remains a myth".


1.2. Restoring Women's History to Women


2) Ibid., p. 159: Some feminist historians have thus come to view gender "at the core of all world-views and social formations", whilst other feminist
anthropologists maintain to have discovered cultures where gender "is not a
central organising principle."

3) Ibid., p. 160.
4) Ibid., p. 160.
5) Ibid., p. 160.

6) S. Lennox explains the origins of these terms as follows (p. 161):
   1) misogyny - 1970 - after Kate Millet's Sexual Politics
   2) gynocritics -1977 - after Elaine Showalter's A Literature of their Own
   3) palimpsestic - 1979 - after Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's The
      Madwoman in the Attic

7) Ibid., p. 163.
8) Ibid., p. 163: It appears that neither feminist Lacanians nor feminist
    Derrideans are capable of coming to grips with historical or cultural
    differences among women or with other distinctions that might traverse and
    modulate gender.

9) Ibid, p. 163.

1.3. Feminism in Austria

1) J. Vansant, Against the Horizon, (Greenwood Press, 1988), p. 16:"All
citizens are equal before the law. Privileges of birth, sex, status, class, and
religion are forbidden."

99: In America, a similar notion, i.e. the illeged assault upon the traditional
family unit, prevented the ERA (Equal Right Amendment) from ever being
passed. The STOP ERA campaign, led by Phyllis Schlafly, argued that the
ERA campaign would "eliminate the complex web of laws that surround and
protect the institution of marriage. In particular, by forbidding all
differences in the treatment of the sexes, ERA would eliminate a married
woman's right to be supported by her husband (making a wife, even one
with young children, equally liable to support her husband), to receive
alimoney and presumptive custody of her children in case of divorce, and it
would in general impair the right of women to pursue careers as full-time
homemakers.

3) J. Vansant, p. 27
4) Ibid., p. 28.
5) Ibid., p. 28. The major conflict amongst these small groups of feminists
revolves around the basic issue of women's role within the family.

6) Ibid., p. 35.
7) Ibid., p. 35: "Women's concerns may not necessarily get bad press, but feminists, 'libbers' (Emanzen), as they are called by the press, are constantly being dismissed as witches and manhaters".

1.4. Feminism Today

1) S. Lennox, "Feminist Scholarship", pp. 160, 161: "Feminist scholarship has been in the main resolutely essentialist - that is - has assumed all women are the same, without investigating women's condition in the society that produced them...The women of any society operate within the constraints of a dominant discourse about gender, which limits their own actions and thoughts and also shapes their efforts to describe women's condition and derive a theory and a practice of women's resistance".

2) All quotes by Paglia are based on an interview with Phillip Adams on ABC Radio in August 1991. Camille Paglia teaches Humanities at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia and is the author of a book titled Sexual Personae. Art and Decadence from Nefertiti to Emily Dickinson. (Yale University Press, New Haven, 1990) she complains that she has been wrongfully neglected by feminists and other Women's Studies programmes. Paglia maintains, that this book and her unorthodox feminist stance has led to the accusation against her by fellow feminists of being "a false feminist and an intellectual fraud".

3) Ibid.: "They're like Moonies, like Hare Krischnas. They have a whole series of learned rote phrases, like 'No always means no' or 'Rape is a crime of violence, but not of sex'. There are an infinite number of these stupid and nonsensical statements, that people take as if they were created from Mt. Sinai engraved on stone tablets by God himself. This kind of sanctimonious sermonising and posturing that's going on here is appalling and I have emerged as one of the only voices to speak out for true sexual freedom, where women can enjoy the kind of freedom my generation demanded."

N. Davidson, The Failure of Feminism, pp. 97-99, shares a similar view: "swept up in the messianic righteousness of their mission, feminists were unable to believe that other female voices could legitimately challenge theirs" (and hence) "the resulting self-righteousness and lack of realism have been severe liabilities for the feminist movement and for any cause it touches".

4) Paglia, ABC Radio Interview

5) Ibid

6) Ibid

7) B. Pyerin, Mädchenlektüre und Emanzipation: Jugend und Medien (Dipa Verlag, Frankfurt/M, 1989).

8) N. Davidson, The Failure of Feminism. Davidson obviously prefers the traditional model to any optional alternative and offers a traditionally male perspective upon the issues aroused by the feminists of the seventies in particular. One of the major problems revolves around not only the redefinition of the female sex, but also that of the male, due to his recent 'misplaced' identity.
9) See B. Pyerin, Chapter 4. This is in fact, the basis of Erika Fischer's Dissertation titled *Jugendliteratur als Sozialisationsfaktor. Literaturanalysen zum Bild der Frau im Kinder- und Jugendbuch*. Fischer's survey of the 47 most popular texts studied by years 5-9 in 261 High Schools across Schleswig-Holstein reveals that literature containing emancipatory images of women is totally ignored. The images of women, which do occur within the 47 literary texts (mostly in the background) are the ones which reflect either the traditional (maternal, nurturing) role, or that of the unlikeable discontented stepmother-type image. J. Vansant, *Against the Horizon*, p. 34, makes a similar observation in her 1988 dissertation, claiming that "women are under-represented in Austrian schoolbooks and, when portrayed, are in traditional female roles, which do not reflect reality. Such books serve to cement traditional sex-roles and fail to provide schoolchildren with positive egalitarian role models".


11) In 1974 Francoise d'Eaubonne coined the term *ecofeminism* "to represent women's potential for bringing about an ecological revolution to ensure human survival on the planet." See C. Merchant, "Ecofeminism and Feminist Theory." In: *Reweaving the World. The Emergence of Ecofeminism*, (Sierra, San Francisco, 1990), p. 100. According to a November 1991 Radio National Interview with leading Ecofeminists, it appears that there is much friction between the sexes within the ecological and conservation movements, which naturally must be resolved before cross-sexual solidarity can occur. However, cross-cultural solidarity within the sexes is already strong. In a May 1992 Radio National Interview the prominent Environmentalist David Suzuki confirms that the largest group to be actively engaged in environmental issues were women and that the solution to our environmental problems on a global scale can only be met from a woman's point of view.

1.5. Women's Literary History in German-Speaking Countries


3) Ibid., p. 2. By the 18th Century, this image of the ideal woman had been codified and integrated into the bourgeois value system. The oppression of women was thus camouflaged in such a way that it was "cloaked in a myth of spiritual nobility". Women were led to believe that such behaviour ennobled them but in fact it only gave power to middle class males in the private sphere; a power they lacked during feudal hierarchy. In turn, it served to codify "biology is destiny" as a universally valid law, overshadowing the realities of the economic oppression of women.


### 1.6. Austrian Women's Literature

1) G. Sebestyen, *Der Anspruch auf den großen Roman. Über das Wesen der österreichischen Literatur*, pp. 1-2: "Die österreichische Literatur unterscheidet sich von der deutschen durch die Sprache...Die deutsche Literatur ist an solchen [musikalischen] Phänomenen nicht reich; in der österreichischen aber hat die Generation, die in diesem Zusammenhang mit den Namen Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Georg Trakl und Rainer Maria Rilke zu kennzeichnen ist, solche Sprachkultur oder Sprachbesessenheit zum Ausgangspunkt und zum Ziel der literarischen Arbeit erhoben."

2) A. Barthofer, "Der stille Anschluß oder Was österreichische Literatur nicht ist. Anmerkungen zu einer fragwürdigen Tendenz in der neueren Literaturkritik." In: *MAL*, Vol. 17, Nos. 3/4, 1984, p. 130: "Indeed the differences between Austrian and German national consciousness may provide a suitable explanation for the difficulty of establishing distinctly different literary trends. Apart from the melancholic nature, for which Austrian writers are renowned: "die auffallende Indifferenz und Verunsicherung des Österreichers in bezug auf seine Nationale Indentität, die sich in so ausgeprägtem Masse in keiner der staatlich organisierten deutschsprachigen Volksgruppen feststellen, ist wohl nur aus einer komplexen Verflechtung historisch-kultureller und landschaftlich-ethnischer Faktoren zu erklären."


5) Ibid., p. 1206

### 1.7. A Brief Overview of the Literary Background Of Jelinek, Frischmuth and Schwaiger

1) G. Brokoph-Mauch, "Die Prosa Österreichischer Schriftstellerinnen zwischen 1968 and 1983 (Frischmuth, Jelinek, Schwaiger)." In: *Die Österreichische Literatur. Ihr Profil*, p. 1202-1203. Both authors employ language as a means of communicating their ideas, adhering to the authentic
literary techniques of the experimental era. Under the influence of Wittgenstein's philosophy of language, writers during this era concentrated upon the NATURE and FUNCTION of language. They experimented with language for the purpose of creating new poetic effects (concrete or nonsense poetry) and a more precise means of communication (in exposing the use and misuse of language as a means of influencing and manipulating the media). Thus, all three texts contain collage, a play on words, on acoustics, on grammar and on syntax, dislocating meaning from subject matter. Frischmuth's experiment with language revolves around the "Montage verschiedener Sprach- und BewuBtseinsebenen", whilst Jelinek indulges in a linguistic salto-mortale and "Multi-Media Show mit Elementen der antiken Sagenwelt, des Trivialromans, der Trickfilme, der Comics und Horrorstrips."

2) G. Brokoph-Mauch, p. 1203.


4) See G. Brokoph-Mauch, pp. 1202-1203.


8) Ibid., p. 1207. Other prominent feminist texts produced in that time were Verena Stefan's Häutungen, Gerti Tetzner's Karen W., Brigitte Reimann's Franzioka Linkerhand and Irmtraud Morgner's Trobadora Beatriz.

9) Ibid.: "Während die ost- und westdeutschen Kolleginnen unverhüllt autobiographisches Material in ihren Romanen verarbeiten...distanzieren sich beide Österreichiherinnen von ihrer eigenen Person." (p. 1208)

10) Ibid., p. 1208: "Sackgassengeschichten."

11) Ibid., p. 1209: "Die Liebhaberinnen dürfte somit der einzige feministische Roman seiner Zeit sein, der nicht nur in keiner Weise um mitführendes Verständnis für das weibliche Dilemma wirbt, sondern die Frauen erbarmungslos als Mitschuldige, wenn nicht Hauptschuldige anklagt."

12) Ibid., p. 1210.
13) Ibid., p. 1211: "produkiven Scharfblick."

14) Ibid., p. 1211: "So wird der Einzelfall zum Paradebeispiel".

15) Ibid., p. 1216: "Die beiden ersten Teile der Trilogie sind stilistisch pedantisch und inhaltlich banal, die Feen und Geister in österreichischen Trachtenkostümen zu wenig zauberhaft, Amys zwanghafte Wiederholung der Frage "Wer bin ich und was sind meine Probleme" nach ihrer Menschwerdung prosaisch und der durchgehende Optimismus forciert. Diese beiden Werke, obwohl voller reizvollen Momente, stellen im ganzen einen Tiefgang in der künstlerischen Produktion Frischmuths dar. Der Versuch, in 'Amy' ein Zauberspiel und Konversationsstück nach Ferdinand Raimund zu schreiben, ist mißungen....Auch die Hommage an E.T.A. Hoffmann und George MacDonald ergibt nicht viel mehr als Bildungszitate".

16) Ibid., p. 1216. Frischmuth's Klosterschule was rediscovered in 1979, after feminist literary scholars recognised its sexist content - i.e. the preparation of girls for their future roles as wife and mother.


19) G. Brokoph Mauch quotes Brigitte Schwaiger: "mal so etwas schreiben, wie Thomas Bernhard - mal richtig im Unglück wählen." (p. 1217)

20) Ibid., p. 1217: "In ihren Romanen von 1980 bekommen die Figuren zum erstenmal Fleisch und Blut und individuelle Züge."


24) G. Brokoph-Mauch, p. 1221: "Das Offene der Fragestellung und der Form des Romans 'Kai' mündet in der Erzählung 'Bindungen' in eine definitive Antwort und eine entsprechend geschlossene Form. In Stil und Form ist die Novelle meisterhaft."

25) Ibid., p. 1224: "In diesem Buch ist das Zusammentreffen der gemeinsamen Autorenschaft geglückt. Schwaiger ist das aussortierende Medium, das die Erinnerungen des erzählenden Ichs zu einer Komposition aus größter Authentizität, bildkräftiger Aussage, individuellem Erleben und zeitgeschichtlichem Gemälde kunstvoll zusammenfügt. Das jüdische Idiom und das gebrochene Deutsch der Erzählerin verleihen dem Roman Unmittelbarkeit und Erlebnisscharfe".

26) Liebesversuche - Kleine Dramen aus dem österreichischen Alltag.
2.1. PROBLEMS CONFRONTING WOMEN WRITERS

Despite their popularity amongst the reading public, women have only recently begun to be regarded as writers of serious literature. In the past, they were simply 'written off' into the less serious field of trivial literature. In the German-speaking literary world, the term Frauenliteratur has long been synonymous to Trivialliteratur with strong derogatory connotations with regard to other Hohe Literatur, i.e. Männerliteratur, for example the traditional Bildungsroman (1).

No doubt, due to the rebirth of feminism in the 1960s and the subsequent development of a new feminist consciousness, literature, including literary scholarship, has been significantly affected. The women's movement of the Sixties succeeded not only in breaking the long silence regarding women's experience in a male-dominated society, it also introduced new social values and theoretical perspectives. Due to the dedication and effort of feminist historiographers and literary scholars, women writers, whom history had chosen to ignore, have been rediscovered. Amongst them are women writers, who were virtually unknown
because they were either forgotten or lost under male pseudonyms or anonymous publications.

According to literary scholars, such as Christine Battersby the progressional phases of women's literary achievements follow similar patterns in England, France, Germany and America and women of the 17th, 18th and 19th Century wrote and published just as frequently as their male counterparts and were equally popular during their lifetime (2). Women's literary achievements were equal, not only in quantity but also in quality and although women writers had not set a tradition of their own and tended to adhere to conventional literary forms, the subversive nature of many of their texts is unmistakable.

Indeed, the history of women's literature reveals that many of yesterday's women writers wrote for the distinct purpose of liberating their sex from patriarchal stereotypes. Moreover, in their role as mediators between life and art, the creators of intellectual forums, such as Mme de Stael, Rahel Varnhagen, Karín Michaelis or the turn-of-the-century writer, Hannah Arendt, had an enormous influence upon the great thinkers and innovators of their day. Dorothea Veit-Schlegel or Caroline Schlegel-Schilling stood midwives to various literary endeavours, but as they rarely used their own name, many of their contributions appear invisible today. No doubt, there were women who had become successful writers of 'serious' literature during their lifetime, but in many cases the intrigue and scandal surrounding their unconventional lifestyles cast an unfavourable shadow over the significance and context of their work (e.g. Georges Sand and George Eliot). Many suffered as a result of the difficulties they encountered and some even committed suicide.

In spite of the breakthrough, women writers are still being subjected to much harsher treatment by literary critics, who are almost always men applying traditional (male) literary standards. Considered intruders into a male's domain, they are subject to discrimination by the male-dominated industry, which decides which
works are to be printed, marketed or simply rejected. Christa Reinig's much quoted statement "Literatur ist ein hartes Männergeschäft von dreitausend Jahren her" holds much truth. Angelika Mechtel holds a similar view:

Eine Frau, die schreibt ist nicht nur in die Domäne der Dichter und der Denker eingebrochen, sie sieht sich auch mit männlichen Normen des Betriebes konfrontiert, erhält (auch hier) ihre traditionalistische Position als Frau zugewiesen. (3)

According to Sandra Frieden, critics have been much more favourably disposed towards Handke's Die linkshändige Frau than to Brigitte Schwaiger's debut novel Wie kommt das Salz ins Meer despite the fact that Schwaiger's novel was a bestseller (4). Furthermore, according to Gürtler, only one novel written by a woman, Anna Seghers' Das Siebte Kreuz, was accepted into the Zeit Bibliothek's catalogue of the hundred best novels. Not surprisingly, the selection committee was comprised of six men. (5)

Indeed, it is not the case, as Manfred Jurgensen would have us believe, that: "der Massenkonsum befreit die Schriftstellerin und damit die Frau" (6), nor is the influence that literary women have had upon the male-dominated field of literature as extensive as Jürgen Serke claims:

Die Literatur, eine Ewigkeit ebenfalls von Männern bestimmt, propageierte in der BRD vor einem Jahrzehnt ihr Ende und inzwischen schreiben Frauen ein neues Kapitel deutschsprachiger Literatur. (7)

Both statements ignore the many problems women writers experience. Although the German publishing industry became aware of the potential market for women's literature after the phenomenal success of Verena Stefan's Häutungen and publishing companies, such as Fischer, Heyne and Rowohlt began to address a new literary market, they however tolerated a break with tradition only if the trendy heroine mends the error of her ways and returns to her family in the end. Thus, the images of women in women's literature are still defined by men in order to make
them marketable, despite women's attempt to define themselves. As Peter Gorsen correctly puts it:

Weibliche Eigenart und Kreativität sind gleichzeitig Synonyme für ihre Unterdrückung. (8)

In this light it is not difficult to understand why within women's literature, or even feminist literature, only a small number of the more unconventional attempts have actually transcended traditional male views regarding women. Anna Reinsberg captivates the essence of the attitude the marketing industry holds in view of literature written by women:


The many problems women writers must contend with, even successful and professional ones, have been expressed in interviews and in their works. Apart from the restrictions within the industry, women writers are subjected to additional restrictions with regard to their social roles. Barbara Frischmuth, writer, homemaker and mother highlights the typical dilemma experienced by women writers in her position:

Was noch schwierigerer ist: die täglichen Verrichtungen eines Hausfrauen- und Mutterdaseins in die literarische Existenz zu integrieren, anstatt sie als durchaus legitime Ausrede für erlahmende Kreativität zu gebrauchen. (10)

Therefore, even those women writers, who consciously attempt to free themselves from their confined roles cannot escape them, because society is not
supportive of them in this matter. This problem is articulated particularly in women’s subjective and autobiographical works, where the perspective given is that of a woman, who is attempting to come to terms with the conflicting relationship between her creative self and her restrictive, hostile and stultifying social environment.

2.2. IN SEARCH OF A COMMON TRADEMARK IN WOMEN’S LITERARY STYLE

The factor of women’s perception often mentioned in conjunction with aesthetics presupposes the existence of a specifically female voice or mode of writing, which results from the different circumstances under which women write. As such circumstances arise from women’s biological and social functions which are in both cases not only different from those of men, but also more restricting, it is speculated that women’s literature must be differentiated from that of men, because the author is "born female" and "subjected to specific, shared processes of socialisation and mechanisms of oppression" (1).

The theoretical forerunners of such research were French and francophone literary critics. Theorists such as Luce Irigaray, Helene Cixous, Catherine Clément, Claudine Hermann, Annie Leclerc, Monique Wittig and Julia Kristeva explored the prospect of a female voice, integrating anthropological, philosophical, psychological and linguistic elements, as postulated by Levi-Strauss, Derrida, Foucault and Lacan and the key issue common to these theorists is the direct relationship between psychology and language. Irigaray, for example, maintains that cognitive experiences differ considerably between the sexes and that this is reflected in their writing. Men’s discourse therefore tends to be linear and
conclusive, whilst that of women covers a wider range and is more diffuse (2). Helene Cixous, who postulates an 'écriture feminine', maintains nonetheless that literary discourse embodies both masculine and feminine characteristics, offering an escape from the limitations of gender categorisation for both sexes:

difference is not distributed on the basis of socially determined sexes, for there are some men who do not repress their femininity and some women who, more or less strongly, inscribe their masculinity. (3)

Similarly, Julia Kristeva maintains that it is wrong to assume only one central opposition between 'masculine' and 'feminine', since literary discourse contains a myriad of alternative modes to that of the dominant mode, based on logic, reason, linear development and chronology and that these can be employed by either sex (4). Monique Wittig, on the other hand, categorically rejects the concept of 'femininity', declaring it to be "only the way that the masters interpret a historical situation of domination" and proposes the difference between the sexes to be neither ontological nor biological, but political. (5)

Nevertheless, since there is to date "no collective will to struggle against patriarchy" amongst women writers, theorists conclude that neither a 'female' nor a 'feminine' aesthetic could exist but perhaps, a 'feminist' aesthetic could, since there clearly exists a feminist consciousness: (6)

If a literary text makes it clear, that a female character has certain experiences because she is a woman and lives as such under certain specific social circumstances, and if the text somehow gives vent to resultant anger and/or desire to change those circumstances, then perhaps we can start to talk about a feminist aesthetic. (7)

But again, there is no such evidence:


In the light of the above, it is clear, that there is obviously a great deal of confusion in this matter and although it cannot be denied that extensive research into women's literature has revolutionised the concept of aesthetics and provided a most welcome change of perspective regarding women and creativity, the arguments for and against a 'female', 'feminine' and then 'feminist' aesthetic have created significant contradictions amongst women themselves:

Die Bestimmung der Differenz [hat] auch innerhalb der Frauenbewegung in Sackgassen geführt, weil neuerlich versucht wird, aus der weiblichen Körperlichkeit eine ontologische Kategorie zu machen, ein genuines Anderssein jenseits eines historischen Zusammenhangs zu konstruieren. (9)

According to Adelson, it is the concept of aesthetic that is desperately in need of clarification:

Usually we use the word to mean literary forms. Most of the discussions on female and/or feminist aesthetics seems, however, to refer to modes of perception as opposed to modes of expression, although the two are obviously inextricably linked. (10)

Thus, we should perhaps rather assess literary aesthetics from a multiple of perspectives, which, in turn, will open doors to unexplored forms of literary expression. Taking into account that literature is a means of authentically reflecting social reality, women writers cannot be judged according to traditional modes of perception (11). The majority of women writers do not strictly adhere to a "specific kind of political discourse - a critical and theoretical practice committed to the
struggle against patriarchy and sexism" (12), but rather formulate a discourse
reflecting their own experiences within a patriarchal society, creating literature of a
more implicitly emancipatory nature, for as Morgner claims:

Das, was jahrtausendelang in den Sitten geworden ist, kann man nicht in Jahrzehnten
ändern. (13)

2.3. DEFINITION AND FUNCTIONS OF STEREOTYPES

Angelika Wenzel defines stereotype as follows:

Ein Stereotyp ist der verbale Ausdruck einer auf soziale Gruppen oder einzelne
Personen als deren Mitglieder gerichtete Überzeugung. Es hat die logische Form
einer allgemeinen Aussage welche in ungerechtfertigt vereinfachender Weise, mit
emotionall-wertender und normativer Tendenz einer Klasse von Personen bestimmte
Eigenschaften oder Verhaltensweisen zu- oder abspricht. (1)

Stereotyping can best be defined as a form of categorisation, which reflects an
exaggerated belief, oversimplification, or uncritical judgement (2). The category
may be a neighbourhood, a city, a newspaper, members of a profession, believers
of a religion or an individual or group of individuals, who, as a result of their
specific attributes and characteristics, fit into a particular category, which has been
labelled and come to be regarded as a universally true and unalterable state or
quality. In light of the above, stereotyping can be seen as a fixed and preconceived
notion about people, places and things, which are often accepted by people as fact.
(3)

Not all stereotypes are negative, some are even quite positive and groups are
sometimes responsible for creating, or at least abetting their own stereotype (4). In
other words, although stereotyping is often transcendant in nature and hence
beyond the control of the individual, it is not always the case. For example, the
women are emotional is a general statement attributing all women of all cultures the quality of being emotional purely by virtue of their sex. This, of course, is beyond the individual’s control. On the other hand, the statement she is a typical woman lends itself to the conclusion that she has herself contributed towards creating her image.

Stereotyping is the most common form of evaluating people simply by virtue of a) their race - Jews are greedy; b) their sex - men are born leaders; c) their appearance - he/she is a slob; d) their behaviour - he/she is a go-getter. In some cases, the owner has no control over the image he/she is given (a,b), in others he/she has (c,d). The reason why stereotyping is so commonly used is that it is a very efficient way of coping with our environment. By simplifying concepts with which we are confronted and breaking them down into categories, the complex nature of many phenomena can be more readily understood. It would be impossible for people to function, if everything that happened were dealt with on an individual basis and treated as if it were taking place for the first time. Thus, stereotyping is convenient, though often inaccurate.

Stereotyping occurs from the moment one is born. Baby girls are dressed in pink, baby boys in blue. Toys are selected in accordance with the child’s sex and typical behavioural traits and outward appearance are predetermined and enforced upon the infant by its elders. In turn, infants are rewarded when they behave in accordance with social expectations with regard to their sex and reprimanded when they do not. As each has a different role to fulfill, children are trained from an early age how to behave and function in a manner appropriate to their sex, first in the home and later at school. Indeed, this then continues throughout life.

Stereotyping is deeply embedded in our culture. In one way, it serves to liberate the individual from the agony of free will - for free will is accompanied by full acceptance of responsibility of one’s actions and very few people want to take
that burden upon themselves. In many instances, people are relieved that preset patterns of behaviour and self-presentation exist, for they serve to predict society's reaction in the form of approval, disapproval, shock, or admiration. As many individuals wish to avoid personal autonomy when they feel insecure (for fear of ostracism from either their community or their superior, should they display uncategorical behaviour or self-expression), they can readily fall back upon socially acceptable modes of behaviour and/or self-presentation as valid guidelines.

One must again bear in mind, that stereotypes, although exaggerated, "possess more than a kernel of truth" (6), as they are derived from observed patterns of behaviour, which are both consistent and true. Moreover:

All racial and ethnic stereotypes stem, in some measure, either from the historical experiences and culture of the groups or from the historical experiences and culture of the nations that had contact with the group. (7)

As man has gravitated towards communal living since the beginning of time and since standard patterns of behaviour play an integral part in every community, the act of role-playing within the community is essential to its survival as an entity. Although the roles played may vary from one culture to another and are by no means universal per se, each independent group (or interdependent groups) of social beings has developed and maintained its own set of values, so that communal life and social interaction is governed by order and not chaos.

In contrast, it is the individualist, the extremist, the idealist, who dares to consciously ignore social norms (consequently experiencing social disapproval the most), as he/she tests the borderlines of social tolerance. Into that category falls the artist/writer/creator of new and different ideas, whose desire for self-expression and personal autonomy is so strong that he/she clearly stands beyond the norm. In turn, society views him/her with ambivalent feelings of awe and distrust.

In that light, the problem the individualist faces lies not so much in the stereotypical roles themselves, which, as mentioned before, he/she has consciously
chosen to ignore, but in the way of social scepticism and intolerance with regard to the not so acceptable stereotypes, he/she may personify. Alone the fact that most forms of positively viewed stereotypes (e.g. breadwinner, mother) do not apply to the non-conformist, is already reason enough to generate public disapproval.

For the artist, stereotypes play an eminent role in his/her character portrayal and are, more often than not, used as a lethal weapon against unjustified social prejudices. Since stereotyping is so integrated into our culture, the public is in many instances not even aware of the fact that its discriminatory powers rob the individual of his/her individuality. Moreover, as Helmreich's study proves, many stereotypes are outdated and, although they may have been true at one point in history, they no longer apply today, but people still refer to them as if they did. To rectify this, one must arouse public awareness and this can be done by demystifying false and unjustified stereotypes, as they only serve to generate and maintain unnecessary prejudices and misunderstandings. Once this has been successfully done, a change, particularly in public attitude, is more likely to eventuate.

SOME TRADITIONAL STEREOTYPES

MOTHER
loving
caring
nurturing
considerate
undemanding
self-sacrificing

HOUSEWIFE
houseproud
hospitable
budget-conscious
multi-talented: cooks, sews, mends, irons, knits and cleans
2.4 THE IMAGES OF WOMEN AS WIFE, MOTHER AND HOMEMAKER

The family, as the fundamental instrument and foundation of patriarchal society and as mediator between the individual and social structures, is both a mirror of and a connection to society at large, effecting control and conformity where political and other authorities are insufficient. The roles within the family unit are thus prototypical (1). Traditional stereotypes of the proper woman in her role as wife, mother and homemaker as they exist today in the nuclear family situation, are a comparatively recent concept, having evolved in Victorian times, when the role of the middle-class housewife and mother became that of full-time caregiver for her children and provider of a sanctuary or haven for her family (2). Coined in the 1880s in German-speaking countries as 'geistige Mütterlichkeit' (indicating the...
desired qualities to be brought to girls' education, as dealt with in Chapter Four, it elevated womanhood to a spiritual level and transformed it into a virtue in itself.

In a booklet distributed by the Women's Advisory Council of New South Wales, (2) the following qualities are listed for full-time housewives/mothers. The housewife/mother is:

- manager of a lively team of demanding individuals of differing needs and personalities.

- required to perform and co-ordinate the following functions: companion, counsellor, financial manager, buying officer, teacher, nurse, chef, nutritionist, decorator, cleaner, driver, child care supervisor, social secretary and recreation officer.

- able to display unlimited drive, strongest sense of responsibility.

- independant and self-motivated and be able to work in isolation, without supervision and under stress for long periods of time if necessary.

- flexible to perform a number of conflicting tasks at one time without tiring and adaptable to handle all new developments in the life of the team, including emergencies and serious crisis.

- able to communicate on a range of issues with people of all ages, including public servants, schoolteachers, doctors, dentists, tradespeople, businesspeople, teenagers and children.

- healthy, creative, active, outgoing and encourages the physical and social development of the team.

- imaginative, sensitive, warm, loving, understanding, since she is responsible for the mental and emotional well-being of the team.

**Hours of work:** All waking hours and a 24-hour shift when necessary.
**Pay:** No salary or wage. Allowances by arrangement with income-earning member of the team. May be required to hold a second job, in addition to the one above.

**Benefits:** No guaranteed holidays. No guaranteed sick leave, maternity leave or long service leave. No guaranteed life or accident insurance. No worker's compensation. No superannuation.

The above information certainly heightens the awareness with regard to the extent of work involved in mothering and housekeeping. Apart from elevating the self-esteem of women, who are either in or have been in that position, it enlightens women, who are about to enter this field. The booklet raises other related issues, such as the ambivalent and contradictory attitudes of society regarding 'women's work' - i.e. on the one hand, a high value is placed on women who stay at home and devote their lives to their families, but on the other, a low value is placed on the work they actually do - and proposes a change. Women should evaluate the 'market- and opportunity cost value' of their work at home and receive compensation from their employed partner after negotiating a work contract, in which housework, childcare and decision-making are shared, free time is allowed to both partners, provisions such as a retirement fund, an insurance policy in case of accident or death and access to property and funds are ensured to both partners. Moreover, women should be allowed to (re)enter the workforce or seek further education if they so decide, for the purpose of which public childcare facilities should be available.

However enlightening the booklet may be, it disregards the fact that the nuclear family system (which now includes de-facto relationships) is not a prerequisite to mothering and housekeeping. It fails to offer women advice or support with regard to alternative living arrangements, such as sole-parenting or lesbian partnerships. In terms of traditional partnerships, it ignores the fact that sex and age still today determine one's position within the family structure in view of power and esteem.
and in that light, it is improbable for the majority of women to successfully negotiate the above issues with their partners.

2.5. THE MEDIA IMAGE OF THE IDEAL WOMAN

When one thinks of a housewife, a secretary, a mother, a princess, a ballerina, a vamp, a movie star, a nurse, a schoolteacher, a schoolmistress, a factory worker, a model, a prostitute or a high-class call-girl, whatever category one may have in mind, one automatically projects an image in one's head of a 'typical' look that person is likely to have and of 'typical' mannerisms that person is likely to display. In many instances, this image is correct (resulting in the reinforcement of that particular stereotype), but in some, it is not and we are somewhat surprised to find the person in question so 'untypical' of her stereotype.

Besides the practical side of stereotyping - i.e. a way of helping us cope with the complex nature of our environment, stereotypes can also be manipulated in such a way, that they serve to reflect the political and social climate of the day. If we take a closer look at the stereotype of the 'ideal woman' and that of the 'unideal woman', we cannot help but notice that the conflicting images indeed reflect priorities held by men. The images are interchangeable and can readily be replaced or rearranged to suit the value system of their day. Take, for example, the image of the 'ideal woman' during World Wars I and II, when patriotism and fighting for one's country took priority above everything else. Women were regarded as economic equals and expected to keep the country going, whilst the men were off fighting for a higher cause. After the war, however, when the 'higher cause' no longer existed, women's productive ability was replaced by their reproductive ability. They were encouraged to give up their career and return to the kitchen, despite (or perhaps because of) having proven themselves capable of doing men's
work. The idea of being replaced by a woman in the economic and productive spheres obviously threatened men and the image of the ideal woman was readjusted to protect their ego. Marriage and motherhood became the key image and a woman's priorities again centered 'naturally' around homelife.

The feminists of the Sixties hoped to change the image of the ideal woman from that of an eternally maternal to that of a career-oriented and financially independant being. Again, the notion of being replaced by women in the economic and productive spheres threatened men and such a radical reversal of traditional roles significantly affected both sexes, as a result of which, neither sex could wholly identify with the role-models open (or closed) to them. The friction between the sexes intensified, resulting in an overwhelming return of polarised sex roles during the eighties, in which women were again "not far removed from excellent servants" (1). In fact, since the mid-eighties, the image of the ideal woman is one of both a successful careerperson and a good homemaker, having learnt to master both the domestic and professional spheres of her life. Needless to say, such images are also far from realistic and function as a backlash against women's increasing participation in the paid workforce:

Today as in the fifties this is still the role of the proper woman...Women's share (in the home) is expected and barely acknowledged (and) many women trying to perform fulfilling professional work find they are putting their jobs second. (2)

It thus appears that the conflicting images of the ideal woman and the contemporary roles her emancipation has supposedly created for her yet remains unresolved. As Sally Cline discloses in her article *Just Desserts. Women and Food*:

I expected the world to be different from the world of the sixties. But the data I have covered on cooking and catering suggests that the social world we inhabit is not fundamentally different. Women today, who shoulder professional roles outside the home (as well as unpaid ones within it) still receive less power, prestige, status and control than do men, who work in absolutely comparable roles. (3)
What in fact is lacking in the creation of the emancipated woman of the nineties is a flexible fusion of the two dominant but conflicting images (i.e. careerperson/homemaker) with all of its subsequent variations. No doubt, very few women can relate to the ideal image of today's 'superwoman', who is, in more ways than one, simply an update of the mother stereotype of the fifties; attractive, slim, well-groomed, self-assured, successful and adored by everyone (4). If feminists hope to achieve amongst women a collective struggle against patriarchy, their aim should be to change those ideals and images that are essentially harmful to women and to educate and enlighten both sexes in this regard (5). Most women in the West simply assume equality without realising the struggle involved. Their ignorance of feminist issues makes them unaware of implicit feminist messages contained in or touched upon in many popular novels, films, short stories, soap operas, newspaper or magazine articles (6). Feminists are becoming more vociferous and, in that light, the parameters of women's stereotypical roles are being challenged, which of course, involves the re-evaluation of men's stereotypical roles and yet one cannot deny that there is still much room for improvement (7).

Furthermore, women must realise their potential and develop it into a strategy of empowerment. For far too long, women have been conditioned to behave submissively towards the opposite sex and competitively towards their own and in many instances, they are not even aware of the extent of their conditioning. Feminist propaganda must be diverse and must cover a wide range from the most light-hearted to the most intense and politically engaged exponents of media representation and must address women of all ages, cultural, racial and ethnic backgrounds, on each and every level of their social and intellectual standing.
Women must first become more aware of the essence of their struggle before they
can even begin to join forces.

With increased awareness of the need to create a new identity for both sexes, the
influence of feminism on the mainstream of contemporary Western ideology should
flourish and (should, along with the rebirth and renewal of feminism) open an
entirely new dimension for women on the private level, an area which has to date
remained almost untapped. Like in all previous eras, the stereotypes of the ideal
woman reflect only a marginal aspect of the real world and, apart from the fact that
both sexes are now struggling to find new identities, one can conclude that women
are still being defined by modes beyond their control. Men still control women's
bodies and lives with the power of stigma and approval in a society, "where
Western women's expectations and potential rights and opportunities appear to have
increased, but where women's hold on real power has not" (8).

2.6 THE FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE OF FEMININITY AND ITS
SOCIO-POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS

Due to the fact that women have inadvertently internalised the cultural
inscription of femininity and their normative sex-role expectations, they have also
inadvertently reinforced the necessary external conditions for their oppression.
This in turn raises the question of whether this has a material base or whether
women are simply the victims of a belief system and the significance of both
aspects have been under critical examination by feminist scholars over the past two
decades with two distinct, but contradictory, trends emerging.

The first trend advocates femininity to be a highly disarming concept, whereby
the images of women are deliberately tailored to their subordinate status. Echoing
Jung's anima theory, this group of feminists views the concept of femininity as
utterly degrading (to women) and renounces the entire concept of femininity (1).
Most heavily under attack are the recurring images and subsequent variations of the eternal feminine, a term such feminists interpret as symbolic of women's powerlessness cloaked under a veil of male chivalry. In an interview held twenty-five years after the publication of her controversial book *The Feminine Mystique* Betty Frieden, one of the major representatives of this trend, criticised the return of femininity, as portrayed in the fashion world of the eighties as follows:

There is no way you can wear skirts as short as they are showing for Spring '88 and do anything serious. The 12" skirt and the 7" heels - I say, watch it, watch it. I think some of the new fashions are expressing a backlash against women. (2)

According to feminists like Frieden, this is all a 'bluff' and the eighties generation of women fell for it. Frieden's German colleague, Margret Eifler expresses a similar view:

Der Umschwung vom Feminismus zu einer neuerlichen Feminität ereignete sich also durch den Bluff einer Substitution des Realen durch Zeichen des Realen, der Anspruch nach Intergration wurde simulativ befriedigt. Ihre emanzipatorische Forderung wurde in einem Äquivalenzsystem untergebracht, das eine beschwichtigende, egalitäre Akzeption vorgab, das aber nicht weiter als eine dissuative Operationsform war. Die patriarchalische Vorstellung von Weiblichkeit organisierte sich in ein materialistisches Modell der Parataxis, so dass die Frau als nebengeordnete (und nicht mehr als untergeordnete) Konfiguration erscheint und insofern der männlich-hierarchische Charakter unsichtbar wird. (3)

The counter-trend to the above advocates that women's strength lies in their femininity. Feminists like Camille Paglia claim that "contemporary feminism has cut itself off from history and bankrupted itself when it spun its puerile, paranoid fantasy of male oppressors and female sex-object victims" and that the other feminists simply fail to see that "women are the dominant sex" and that "women's sexual glamour has bewitched and destroyed men since Delilah" (4). Like Frieden, Paglia has been active since the sixties, but unlike Frieden and her colleagues, Paglia holds the opposite view on the position of femininity within Western culture.
To Paglia, sexuality is "a dark, turbulent force, that you cannot control and it is totalitarian to try. Women are and always have been the dominant species and everyone knows it; men know it, women know it, only feminists don't see it!" (5):

It seems to me that certain archetypes keep coming back throughout history. They're eternal, not simply male fictions - conspiracies designed to keep women in their place. One of the big one is, of course, the femme fatale, the Medusan mother. This I think is not some sort of propaganda invented by men, but something that reflects the male attitude towards the female body. In the act of intercourse, every man risks being devoured anew by the womb, from which he came, so I think there's an element of sexual anxiety in the relationships between the sexes that contemporary feminism isn't acknowledging. Feminism seems to believe that if we can adjust the social mechanism to produce political equality between man and woman, there'll be no more problems. What my book is saying is that there is an element of instability, of disorder, of chaos going on in what I call 'sexual space', that no matter what you do to order political or social space, sexual space will still be at the mercy of the dream world and all kinds of power principles that we don't have rational control over. (6)

Paglia considers femininity "a great artifice" and "not simply an oppressive system that is imposed on women" (7). She says in a radio interview with Phillip Adams:

Femininity is a great art form, that is characteristic only of cultures at their high point. In my book, I say that Egypt invented femininity in this sense. The whole ritual of cosmetics, of ornamentation, of beautiful gestures, and so on, this is something that feminism is not seeing clearly enough. (8)

For this group of feminists, femininity is powerful and the ills of feminism can only be cured by reasserting women's command of the sexual realm. They refer to ancient matrilineal cultures, in which women were the dominant species because of their sexuality. Paintings and carvings of ancient goddesses in fact accentuate the many curves and crevices of the female body, which absolutely exude with feminine (or what was then considered 'feminine') sexuality. Because of man's fear of succumbing to the all-powerful, all-devouring, all-encompassing force of female sexuality (9), he created a male 'counter-culture' and thus a culture, in which the subjugation of the former is as imminent as is the glorification of the latter via masculine phallic symbols.
The experiences of our not too distant past have certainly proven that the 'contrived' feminine images that Frieden and her colleagues had hoped to destroy via consciousness-raising tactics survived. Indeed, most women enjoy being women, who love men, who attract men and who are sexually desirable to men. Femininity per se is not the cause of women's subjugation. Women can be both feminine and powerful. Women are not the passive objects of normative sex-role expectations, as male fantasies of female nature would have us believe. Conforming to patterns of femininity does not necessarily indicate personal weakness, stupidity or helplessness but can imply a strategic use of patriarchal norms to enforce their own interests and desires. Women can implement the norms of femininity to get what they want, for this belongs to women's traditional arsenal of weapons. Whilst such strategies may not triumph over misogyny, it does provide a second conclusion about women's social behaviour: women merely feign accommodation to feminine norms because men keep falling for such guiles. Unfortunately, most feminists have not paid enough heed to this form of resistance (10). In light of the pros and cons regarding the contradictory views feminists have on the subject of femininity, it appears that a reshuffling and representation of existing stereotypes, as well as an integration of new ones, is a most necessary step towards a successful redefinition of woman. As Paglia claims, women have enormous power in the sexual realm - and this in turn extends to the domestic and the economic spheres. Women not only service in bed and in the kitchen, they are the primary consumers, as well marketing agents (11). Most importantly, women perform work without which our society could not survive and in performing such tasks, develop a social behaviour that precludes the male-dominated values of economic exchange and competition and thus transcends the existing power structure (12).

Therefore, women's mode of production oriented towards satisfying needs, defends itself against a patriarchal-capitalist environment. These are no doubt
potentially powerful strategies, which should not be disregarded or trivialised. Women's real claim to liberation lies therefore also in the superior position of their mode of production, a potential, which has yet to be adequately developed and until this has been done, they will continue to be exploited.

Haas suggests a dialectic approach be adopted and postulates that whilst women's normative orientations have served to reinforce patriarchal dominance, they also serve as a counterforce against the existing power structure and thus transcend patriarchal norms and represent the potential for women's resistance (13). Since femininity does not preclude power, it must be redefined and women will be able to be feminine and have the equality they seek on their own terms. After all, the basic ideology behind the feminists' utopian social matriarch is based upon the female principle - the qualities of which revolve around women's basic instinct to preserve and maintain, rather than dominate and destroy, which in turn, results in peaceful and harmonious existence and co-existence. Perhaps the women of today are not so much 'blinded' by their stereotypes, but moreso 'blinded' by the contradictions inherent in these stereotypes. Thus, by making women aware of these contradictions and teaching them that being 'feminine' does not culminate in their subjugation, they will learn to appreciate their femininity from a more emancipatory perspective.

2.7. LITERATURE AS A POLITICAL TOOL

Contemporary feminist writers acknowledge the relationship between feminist politics and feminist literature and recognise the importance of transmitting such ideas to the media. For this purpose, the concept of literary authenticity must be revised, as Anne Cranny Francis explains:
Feminist writers are now performing a complex aesthetic/ideological manoeuvre; utilizing their relegation as inferior or mass culture producers in order to show the legitimating process in operation; using generic forms in order to show the ideological processes (of patriarchy) in (textual) operation. They are working with literary forms that have always been women's special providence - from economic necessity and through masculinist characterization and their contemporary manipulation of these forms is enlightened by the practical advances of the Women's Movement since the 1960s and its accompanying theoretical development. (1)

No doubt today's literary women are in a position to "produce provocative literature that challenges the status quo" (2) and, if not to show their readers alternatives (as Frischmuth does), then at least to make them aware of the need to change existing ideologies (as Jelinek and Schwaiger do). Yet, to date, as the previous chapters have revealed, feminist voices have found little resonance in the broad media.

Thus, Jelinek's negative view with regard to the revolutionary potential of her works upon working class women (since the actual readers/audiences of her books/plays belong predominantly to the middle and upper middle classes), is not without cause and she realises that her books are thus destined to stimulate the intellectual elite (3). Frischmuth and Schwaiger, although not nearly as explicitly political as Jelinek, also appeal to a significant segment of the reading public (4). Schwaiger reached an even broader audience with her bestseller Wie kommt das Salz ins Meer after having her novel filmed and presented on television in German-speaking countries. On a similar note, Jelinek's novel Die Ausgesperrten and her adaptation of Bachmann's Malina have also been put to the screen. Obviously, more should be done to bring the works of such talented women writers to a significantly broader spectrum of television and film audiences.

In light of the above and in view of Vansant's definition of current feminist consciousness (5), the literary works of Jelinek, Frischmuth and Schwaiger will be examined with regard to their emancipatory potential (6). From recent and not so recent articles and interviews it appears that all three authors are not at one with the term feminist. According to Vansant, Jelinek alone "unequivocally calls herself a
feminist” (7); according to Lorenz, she categorically “rejects the epithet 'feminist’” (8). Vansant also accounts for the reasons behind Frischmuth's ambivalence and Schwaiger's rejection of the term (9). Nonetheless, all three authors are considered feminist writers by literary critics and, as this chapter will clearly reveal, all three are committed to feminist issues, in accordance with current definitions (10). They each deal with the essential problem confronting women in view of the liberation of their sex (i.e. the dilemma of women's biological sexuality v/s their socially constructed sexuality) from a different but nevertheless equally significant perspective, but the question of their emancipatory potential yet remains obscure.

Each author is, in her own right, an excellent observer and critic of the negative effects the stereotypical roles women are conditioned to play within contemporary Western European (i.e. Austrian) society have. Whereas Frischmuth and Schwaiger almost exclusively recreate characters and settings central to their own rather privileged, middle-class experience and upbringing and then show how unsettling these aspects are when applied to the individual, Jelinek, who adheres to the orthodox Marxist philosophy, claims that individualism is no longer possible and that there is 'no way out' until the entire capitalist superstructure has been abolished (11). Thus, she aims to expose "the (im)mature delinquency of an entire civilisation" (12) rather than the plight of the individual. Jelinek states in an interview that her characters "..sind keine psychologischen Figuren, das sind Typenträger, Vertreter ihrer Klasse, ihrer Erziehung" (13). For Jelinek, the individual represents a means of exposing a given collective, since the individual merely emulates the behaviour and attitudes typical of his/her particular group or class, in which he/she is entrapped.

The authors' position is reinforced not only contextually, but also in their choice of style and language. Jelinek attacks most severely existing stereotypes, revels in shock-treatment and blatant sarcasm and manufactures deliberate exaggerations of
stereotypical characters and situations, in order to underline her cutting social comments (14). On the other hand, Schwaiger's fiercely ironic portrayal of middle-class morality with its inherent double-standards can be understood as a direct inquisition into the political configuration of heterosexual relations. Frischmuth is much more subtle and knows how to blend the credible with the incredible, in her attempt to break free from existing stereotypes and provide the reader with positive alternative role models. The idea of literature initiating direct political change in Austria however appears to her improbable, because of its conservative political climate.


As Gudrun Brokoph-Mauch points out, the authors do not pretend to offer the reader simple solutions to complex situations, not even in the short-term (16) and this is no doubt simply because there are none.

2.8. THE CONCEPT OF PATRIARCHAL CAPITALISM FROM A MARXIST-FEMINIST'S PERSPECTIVE: ELFRIEDE JELINEK'S MICHAEL. EIN JUGENDBUCH FÜR DIE INFANTILGESSELLSCHAFT AND LUST

The socio-political context within which feminist literature in both Anglo-American and German-speaking countries is placed, analysed, evaluated is frequently termed 'patriarchal-capitalist'. This is a notion central to Jelinek's thinking. Jelinek explicitly directs her criticism against both patriarchy and capitalism. Before looking at specific examples from Jelinek's Lust and Michael, Ein Jugendbuch für die Infantilgesellschaft in order to illustrate and contextualise the above concepts, it is useful to define them first. Lisa Tuttle's Encyclopedia of
Feminism defines 'patriarchy' (literally meaning 'rule of the father') as the "universal political structure which privileges men at the expense of women...It is used sometimes as a synonym for male domination, sometimes to refer to a specific historical, social structure."(1)

Capitalism according to the Australian Pocket Dictionary is "the economic system characterised by private ownership and control of the means of production, distribution and exchange by the profit motive" (2) which, according to Tuttle, must be destroyed, not only to free the workers, but "to emancipate women both as workers and in their particular relation to reproduction". (3)

Tuttle's theory regarding the inevitable connections between patriarchy and capitalism as the common enemy of women is modelled upon Friedrich Engels, who postulates that monogamy is the primary institution for the oppression of women and that monogamy is marriage based on the idea of private ownership and hence inextricably linked to capitalism and a class society. Other than the Liberal feminists, most strands of feminism recognise that the capitalist system benefits and perpetuates sexism and that the overthrow of patriarchy will also require the abolition of capitalism (4).

Jelinek's texts best illustrate the Marxist feminist's perspective of a patriarchal-capitalist society and the effects it has upon both the working class and women. Her works portray a microcosm of the above and revolve around the lives of men and women, who are either factory workers, factory owners or wives of factory owners. In each case, the workers and the women are being exploited by the factory owner, who regards them as his property and as such, under his absolute power; women are being doubly-exploited because of their sex. Jelinek satirises the God-like omnipotence of the factory magnate, particularly in Lust, with regard to his relationship to women and nature (both of which must dominate and destroy) and progress and culture both of which he must value and encourage, since they
represent the male principle and are extensions of himself. The factory owner in *Lust* is the supreme ruler both at work and at home. At work, he exploits his employees and treats them as if they were machines, that is, as a reflection of their relationship to his control over the means of production, distribution and exchange by the profit motive:

Der Direktor kennt seine Arbeiter nicht einzeln, aber er erkennt ihren Gesamtwert, grüße euch Gott, alle miteinander. Ein Werkschor ist angeschafft worden und wird mit Spende geldern unterhalten, damit der Direktor mit sich dirigieren kann...Mit bedächtigen arbeitsamen Schritten quellen die Sänger aus dem gemieteten Bus, der von ihrem Mist dampft und sie erproben ihre Stimmen gleich in der Sonne. Die Gesangswolken erheben sich unter der Hülle des Himmels, wenn die Gefangenen vorgeführt werden. [LU, 8].

Female employees are subjected to additional discrimination:

Der Direktor ist im Verein der Machtvollen übereingekommen, zuerst die Frauen zu entlassen.... [LU, 161]

and sexual harassment. They are powerless to do anything about it, because they need their jobs:

Nicht einmal Sekretärinnen wollen zugeben, daß sie sich von den Griffen in ihre Blusen angeprangert fühlen. Sie lachen. Hier existieren ungehörig viele, als daß alle genügend ungehöriges Futter bekommen können [LU, 37]

At home, the Direktor's wife Gerti, whom he regards as another of his employees, falls victim to violent sexual abuse and, like his employees, she too is personally and financially at his mercy:

Die Frau öffnet den Mund, um ihm abzusagen. Sie denkt an seine Kraft und schließt den Mund wieder....Die Frau lacht nervös, als sich der Mann, noch im Mantel, gezielt vor ihr entblößt.... Die Frau lacht lauter und schlägt sich mit der Hand erschrocken auf den Mund. Ihr werden Prügel angedroht. [LU, 16]
or:
Die Frau springt, verlegen mit ihrem Körper rudern, in den Wind hinein. Sie ist Fleisch geworden und hat unter uns gewohnt. Dem Hunger in jeder Hinsicht dienlich sein, das ist ihr Gassenschank gewesen: sich für den Mann das Kind abnutzen lassen, gebettet in deren sanfte Zügel. Sie versucht es damit, einmal Luft
zu holen in ihrem Fangnetz... Voll Scham lacht sie darüber, aber das ist kein Spaß. Sie häuft Ordnung auf die Seligkeiten, die sie hat. Es bleibt ihr nichts. [LU, 59]

The marital violence portrayed in *Lust* reflects the Engelian theory of monogamy (and therefore marriage) as the primary source of women's oppression, as the husband enjoys the role of a feudal lord in a domain which is legally regarded as his as is everyone and everything in it:

Es gefällt ihm, daß die im Ort bestangezogene Frau in ihrem eigenen Schmutz herumlaufen soll. Er schlägt sie zornig auf den Kopf. In der hll. Wandlung hat er ihren Körper auf seine Ausmaße umbauen lassen. Das ist ein Gefäß, zur Entnahme bestimmt, und auch er füllt sich in der Nacht immer wieder, dieser Selbstbedienungsladen, dieser Kaufmannsladen für Kinder, wo man unbesorgt auf die kleine Seite gehen kann. Mit dem Haustorschlüssel hat man schon das Anrecht auf das Tagesgericht erworben, und man kann die Klitoris in die Länge ziehen oder die Klötür zuschmeißen, die röm. kath. Heimat biegt sich, aber sie läßt die Leute zur Schwangerberatung und zum Heiraten gehen. Und das Haus muß SOS blinken, während die Frau zur Anwendung gebracht wird. [LU, 57].

The physical and sexual abuse the Direktor inflicts on his wife in *Lust* is in *Michael* directed at young female employees in the service of their superiors. Although the degree of sexual abuse in *Michael* is not as graphic and violent as in *Lust*, the nature of physical abuse is equally inhumane. The caustic tone employed in the description of the husband-wife relationship in *Lust* is applied in the descriptions of the employer-employee relationship in *Michael*, the stress point in this text being the relationships between (male) bosses and their (female) subordinates.

Again Jelinek criticises the dehumanising effect of capitalist politics, in which workers are owned and controlled by their superiors, who regard them not as individuals but as a herd of workers in their service and under their power. And again, the young female workers suffer a double-burden, because of their position and their sex. *Michael* is the junior boss, with whom Ingrid, one of his young female employees, is desperately in love. She constantly seeks to either make an impression on him or to catch his attention:
Ingrid's mother, who is obviously influenced by 'Cinderella-style' trivial romance novels and films (5) is eager to promote this fictitious union between her daughter and her daughter's boss and Jelinek satirically depicts the futility of Ingrid's attempts as follows:

Like the 'Direktor' in Lust Michael barely acknowledges Ingrid's existence. He certainly cannot tell her apart from his other employees and, when indeed confronted by her, abuses her for having bothered him with such trivia as the food or gifts she offers him. Ingrid receives this message in the most inhumane way:

Michael too, is totally desensitised to violence. In the following scene, once again a male superior abuses his female subordinate, this time both physically and sexually:
hat mir das fräulein gerda etwas schönes mitgebracht? fragt der herr abteilungsleiter
als die besagte durch die tür stolpert behängt mit biergefüllten einkaufstaschen
netzen und tragsäcken. ja herr abteilungsleiter antwortet gerda. hier ist ihr bier.
der herr abteilungsleiter reißt gerda die arme nach hinten und vorne das bürokleid das
die mutti geschneidert hat vom ausschnitt bis zur taille auf. die bierflaschen fallen
gleich hinunter und zerbrechen. die scherben zerschneiden gerdas füße und
beine...der herr abteilungsleiter beißt mit genuß in gerdas linke brust wie ein
apferl...gerda brüllt wie am spiell und so das ist für die kaputten bierflaschen sagt
der herr abteilungsleiter dem der saft zwischen den zähnen herausspritzt und er
schlägt gerda zur strafe. [M, 67]

Ironically, the girls adopt the violent behaviour of their superiors, according to
whose code of behaviour, no distinction is made between reward and punishment,
but they in turn employ it only on themselves:

der herr bürochef schaut gerda nie so freundlich an. vor freude daß herr köster sie
freundlich angeschaut hat schlägt sich gerda freiwillig die glasflasche über den
schädel. die splitter bohren sich sogleich in die himhaut und machen einen lebenden
kaktus aus gerda...[M, 78]

In order to satirise the extent to which young female employees will go, in order
to catch their boss’ attention, Jelinek parodies father/daughter relationships,
implying patriarchy’s ‘rule of the father’-ideology and the ways in which daughters
seek their father's approval. In order to preserve his status and not endanger his
position of superiority by coming down to their level, the father pretends not to be
impressed, although inside, he does experience a definite ego boost:

dann zeigt gerda daß sie noch dazu auf einem bein stehen kann und mit den händen
bitte bitte machen. die andren kaufm. angestellten und lehrlinge sind gerda neidig.
gleich führen sie auch ihre kunststücke vor. sie schlagen räder stehen kopf essen
brennende zigaretten und stechen sich überall messer in den leib [M, 78]

And his reaction is predictable:

herr köster lächelt zwar aber sagt kein wort des lobes. [M, 78].

Jelinek’s texts expose the dilemma of patriarchal-capitalist ideology. The texts
show how the two ideologies are connected and suggest that the abolition of either
one will not provide an end to the dominance/subordinance over women. Patriarchy works quite independently of capitalism and women as a group have been oppressed by men even in pre-capitalist societies. Since all known societies are ruled by men, whatever their economic, political or religious differences, all women suffer a similar oppression and this situation cannot be ended merely by changing the economic system.

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER TWO

2.1. Literary Women and the Myth of Trivia


2) C. Battersby writes in the introduction to her book Gender and Genius. Towards a Feminist Aesthetics (Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1989) that like many other literary scholars experienced during their formal education, she was also given the false impression that only men wrote serious literature, for women writers were rarely, if ever, mentioned. Whilst researching for her PHD, Battersby realised that women also produced good literature, which in turn, inspired her to produce a book, which traces the history of literary women in English-speaking countries. Battersby's book relates many incidences when men actually stole material from women or simply affixed their name to works written by their wives or other close family members. Battersby also claims, that in the case of men, creativity and eccentricity (or even madness) have always been seen positively whereas the opposite is the case with women.

3) C. Gürtler, Schreiben Frauen Anders?, p. 57.


5) C. Gürtler, Schreiben Frauen Anders?, p.57

6) M. Jurgensen, Deutsche Frauenautoren der Gegenwart, p. 22.

7) J. Serke, Frauen Schreiben, (Fischer, Frankfurt/M, 1982), p.10

2.2. The Search for a Common Trademark in Women's Literary Style


3) Helene Cixous, The Newly Born Woman. Theory and History of Language, (University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, 1984), p. 84. Cixous maintains, that an "écriture feminine" exists amongst writers of either sex: "There have always been those uncertain, poetic persons who have not let themselves be reduced to dummies programmed by pitiless repression of the homosexual element. Men or women: beings who are complex, mobile, open. Accepting the other sex as a component makes them much richer, more various, stronger, and- to the extent that they are mobile- very fragile. It is only in this condition, that we invent. Thinkers, artists, those who create new values, "philosophers" in the mad Nietzschean manner, inventors and wreckers of concepts and forms, those who change life cannot help but be stirred by anomalies-complementary or contradictory." C. Paglia expresses a similar view: "Most people are either male or female. What interests me is the whole medium area between the sexes, which is inhabited by artists, by artisans, by drag-queens, etc. We look to art to negotiate between these two polarities. The artist is able to cross that line and bring back information and treasures from the other side." ABC Radio Interview, August, 1991.

4) R. Sherry, p 18.

5) Ibid., p. 18.

6) The confusion surrounding the debate of whether or not feminist literature leads to a common mode of literary expression in fact mirrored the political situation of feminism itself. See L. Adelson, p. 336.

7) L. Adelson, p. 336.

The three decisive elements to be contained in a feminist aesthetic are:
1) Feminist criticism is cultural criticism and should be used as a political tool
2) Neutrality is an illusion
3) Literary works should be studied and judged according to the acceptability of their role models

8) M. Eifler, Postmoderne Feminisierung, p. 19.
9) C. Gürtler, *Schreiben Frauen Anders?*, p. 34.

10) L. Adelson, p. 337.

11) Gürtler casts a favourable light upon that minority of women, who are in fact diverting from traditional literary styles and techniques and maintains that simply because it has to date been impossible to theorize the psychodynamics of women's literature, neither from a stylistic nor from a linguistic perspective, does not in fact mean it does not exist: "Meine Fragestellung: Schreiben Frauen anders? -kann deshalb generell formuliert nur mit 'nein' beantwortet werden. Sie kann sinnvoll nur an einem eingeschränkten Kanon von Frauenliteratur gestellt werden und zwar an Werke jener Autorinnen, die nach einem weiblichen Diskurs, einer weiblichen Identität suchen, die ein 'anderes'- noch nicht definierbares, weil noch nicht entfaltenes - Frauenbild zu entwerfen suchen, und die dadurch, wie Christa Wolf schreibt, auf Widerstand stoßen. Auf Widerstand stoßen die Frauen deshalb, weil sie patriarchalishe Vorstellungen von Weiblichkeit zu überschreiten suchen". See C. Gürtler, *Schreiben Frauen Anders?*, p. 42.

In view of Toril Moi's claim, that feminism is "a political label indicating support for the aims of the NEW Women's Liberation Movement which emerged in the late 60s", feminist criticism, too, is a relatively recent establishment and can well "afford to be tolerantly pluralistic in their choice of literary methods and theories", precisely because "any approach that can be successfully appropriated to their political ends must be welcome." Furthermore, as Moi claims, it should be speculated whether or not men in feminism, who seldom hear their voices echoed in patriarchal discourse, can find their voices in feminist discourse - (Joseph Allen Boone questions - "Me(n) in feminism: whose is the sex that writes?"). See T. Moi, "Feminist, Female, Feminine", p. 123. Ingeborg Bachmann, undoubtedly one the most sophisticated and influential intellectual writers of the pre-feminist era, who nevertheless wrote works dealing explicitly with the multitude of problems intellectual women writers face in a male-dominated world, commented as follows about new and unexplored avenues of aesthetic self-expression, which display equally valid stylistic and linguistic authenticity: "Wenn wir die Suchlampen auslöschen und jede Beleuchtung abschalten, gibt die Literatur, im Dunkel und in Ruhe gelassen, wider ihr eigenes Licht, und ihre wahren Erzeugnisse, schimmernd und mit toten Stellen, Stücke realisierter Hoffnung auf die ganze Sprache...Was wir das Vollendete in der Kunst nennen, bringt nur von Neuem das Unvollendete in Gang." See J. Serke, *Frauen Schreiben*, p. 28.

12) T. Moi, p.120


2.3. Definitions and Functions of Stereotypes


3) Ibid., p. 2.
2.4. Images of Women as Wife Mother and Homemaker


2) All subsequent information is based on *Occupation: Housewife*. A discussion paper published by NSW Women's Advisory Council to the Premier, September, 1980.

2.5. The Contemporary Media Image of the Ideal Woman

1) S. Cline, "Women and Food". In: (Australian) *New Idea*, March, 1992, p. 42. Cline is quoting Emmeline Pankhurst (1914): "It was rapidly becoming clear to my mind that men regarded women as a servant class in the community and that women were going to remain in the servant class until they lifted themselves out of it".

2) Ibid, p. 41.


4) The fifties image of the ideal woman (as portrayed in popular American T.V. shows, such as *Father knows Best, The Donna Reeves Show, Leave It To Beaver*) is not far removed from the image of the ideal woman of the eighties, as her priorities are still expected to focus upon family life and domesticity. Examples of advertisements portraying such stereotypes on Australian television are: MEADOW LEA - "You ought to be congratulated" (for being so beautiful and using the right brand of margarine). SPECIAL K - husband and wife eat healthy, slimming breakfast and wife sets off to work in a mini skirt. LE SNACK - the wife (who is a successful stockbroker, whilst the husband is a "mere" construction site worker knows which is the perfect snack for her family.

5) Naomi Wolf says in an interview that, due the fantasy of the perfect body image being imposed upon young women, sixty-five per cent of women are unhappy with their bodies, ten percent suffer from anorexia, thousands undergo plastic surgery and call it cosmetic. The process of female socialisation allows women to be disfigured and to starve themselves to death and no doubt the self-denial and self-effacement demanded of women serves to to maintain patriarchal norms. See November issue of *Cleo*, p. 103. Marianne Schuhmacher, in her 1984 Dissertation *Frauenbilder in Kurzgeschichten der Massenpresse* also reached the following conclusion: "Rollenverhalten in Kurzgeschichten zeigt sich stark bei den Gründen, aus denen Frauen arbeiten. Implizit geht es jedoch keineswegs um die Gründe, sondern vielmehr darum, daß sie überhaupt arbeiten. Berufung, Selbst-
verwirklichung und selbst soziale Gründe, die doch sogar den Courths-Mahler Romanen zugestanden wurden, spielen eine äußerst untergeordnete Rolle. Arbeiten dürfen Frauen fast nur aus finanziellen Gründen, also dann, wenn es ohne ihr Einkommen nicht mehr geht. Daß Frauen Spaß an ihrem Beruf haben, soll nicht sein, höchstens kann ihre Arbeit noch als Job angesehen werden, den sie aus Langeweile, um sich sinnvoll zu beschäftigen (was nur in Ausnahmefällen akzeptiert wird, vorrangig sollten sie sich um Heim und Familie kümmern), oder zur Überbrückung der Zeit bis zur Hochzeit ausüben."

6) In order to explain why this is so, we must look more closely at the lifestyle of the average married, working mother, who, due to social conditioning, which in turn is reflected in the expectations held by the other members of her family, sets her own, personal priorities last. As Brigitte Pyerin points out in her thesis, the teenage girls in her study did not even recognise the emancipatory messages in Childoue's books. (Fischer and Vansant also state, that the literature studied in German High Schools excludes emancipatory literature written by women). The majority of feminist issues which are represented by media coverage, and this includes the more commercialised genres of contemporary women's literature, such as women's magazines and romantic short stories and novels, deal almost exclusively with aspects, which invariably affect and reflect women in their everyday lives. Australian magazines such as *Woman's Weekly, Woman's Day, New Idea, New Woman*, etc., frequently deal with topics, which were once purely feminist issues but have now come to be accepted as social issues, clearly indicating just how significantly feminist issues have, to differing degrees, affected and influenced media awareness regarding the position of women in society: the exposure of sexual harrassment at work; equal rights in educational and professional matters; domestic and childminding responsibilities of the working mother and her double-burden; sole parenting and related issues; the working mother and her role as co-provider; equal recognition in sporting and other achievements once considered as purely 'male'.

7) Feminist propaganda is slowly but steadily penetrating many spheres of media broadcasting. Women's voices can be heard on radio, on television, in films, in popular songs, on billboards and on paper and they are, at least, speaking out with a feminist voice. Articles specifically dealing with the nature of feminism and with feminist issues are increasingly published in popular glossy magazines such as *Cosmopolitan, Cleo* and *Dolly*, directed at teenagers and young women. K. Cooke's article in the November 1991 issue of *Dolly* is an eloquent example of how to acquaint teenagers with feminist ideals, past and present, in a manner that is both eye-opening as well as intelligible to them. Cooke writes: "Feminists are women who believe in equal opportunity, equal rights and equal pay - no matter whether the person in question has a willy or not. In other words, it's about common sense... (there) were the suffragettes, the women who demanded the right to vote in elections at the turn of the century. These women went on hunger strikes and protested in the streets and were called loony for suggesting that women had brains as well as a body. Then there were the women's libbers, short for the Women's Liberationists, who demanded equal rights in the late sixties. Today, the women who fight for their rights are feminists. Sometimes, it seems people are frightened of being called a feminist: I believe in equal rights, equal pay and I don't reckon the boss has a right to put his hand up my dress, but I'm not a feminist" is a bit like saying "I work
in a big room with lots of books that people borrow, but I wouldn't say I'm a librarian". Feminists have won some rights that you might not even remember but if those rights were taken away, you'd soon know about it...

If feminism becomes a dirty word, some of those hard won rights will be taken away from us. If you'd rather go forward with the rest of us, put on your black dress, whack on your favourite lipstick, share a joke and be proud to call yourself a feminist. The old-fashioned attitudes are still out there - i.e. that feminists are a bunch of whinging ratbag lesbians, who hate men, force women to stop shaving their legs and try to get lipstick classified as a toxic chemical. They're a pack of loonies with no sense of humour, resemble the back of a tractor and that's why they can't get a man! If somebody asks me "Yeah, but what do those man-hating feminists really want?" I can only say, "I don't know, what the man-hating feminists really want, there's only about seven of them. The rest of us feminists want equal rights, equal opportunity, equal pay, a huge piece of chocolate cake, the perfect pair of red shoes and world peace."

8) See S. Cline, p. 41.

2.6. The Feminist Perspective of Femininity

1) No doubt Jung's archetypal theory of the feminine or the "anima" side in men embodies the most undesirable of all feminine character traits: "The anima is a factor of the utmost importance in the psychology of a man wherever emotions and effects are at work. SHE INTENSIFIES, EXAGGERATES, FALSIFIES and MYTHOLOGISES ALL EMOTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS with his work and with other people of both sexes. The resultant FANTASIES and ENTANGLEMENTS ARE ALL A RESULT OF HER DOING. When the anima is strongly constellated, she SOFTENS the man's character and makes him TOUCHY, IRRITABLE, MOODY, JEALOUS, VAIN and UNADJUSTED" and when viewed from a feminist perspective, Jung's analysis of the anima reveals... "the source of emotional alienation from which Western men seem to suffer as they recognise the abysmal side of the bodily man as the "feminine" part of themselves". One means of deconstruction would be to reinforce, what in Jungian terms, is called the 'animus' aspect in women. Jung maintained that "a woman possessed by her animus is always in danger of losing her femininity, her adapted feminine persona, just as a man in like circumstances runs the risk of effeminacy", it appears that the Amazon-stereotype of feminists, whose aim it was to destroy femininity and hence promote the 'animus' side in women, regardless of whether or not they otherwise sympathised with Jungian psychology, stems from this. But, if a utopian social matriarch based on 'the female principle' were to exist, then surely it could not do so at the exclusion of 'feminine' qualities, since 'feminine' is synonymous to 'female principle', refering to 'a woman's conscious way of being in this world". See T. Moi, pp. 122-123.

2) M. Eifler, Postmoderne Feminisierung, p. 6
3) Ibid., p. 6.
4) C. Paglia, Sex and our Quarrel with Nature, p. 41.

6) Ibid.

7) As an avid admirer of prostitutes, porno-queens and drag queens, Paglia claims that "femininity is drag!" and indeed the unisex look, which became a major hit in the world of fashion and music in the 80s, was geared rather towards creating efFEMINite men than eMANcipated women.

8) C. Paglia, *Sex and our Quarrel with Nature*, p. 41.

9) Succumbus- a female demon believed to have intercourse with men in their sleep. See previous chapter dealing with women as bodies.


11) N. Wolf: "We live in a society, where we are regarded as bodies, where women's bodies sell fast cars, microcomputors and idealised heterosexual sex". See *Cleo* (November 1991), p. 103.

12) See L. Haas, p. 336

13) Ibid., p. 336.

2.7. Literature as a Political Tool


2) See J. Vansant, *Against the Horizon*, p. 2. On the topic of political feminism, the sociologist, Friederike Hassauer-Roos, presents the following view: "Das kennzeichnet die zweite Phase des bundesdeutschen Feminismus - ein Bedürfnis, sich der Rivalitätssituation mit dem Mann und ihrer Entfremdung erst gar nicht mehr auszusetzen, sondern eine autonome Gegenwelt aufzubauen." In turn, the DDR writer Christa Wolf presents a comparative view within women's literary world: "Zum erstenmal in ihrer Geschichte definieren sie - ein enormer Fortschritt- ihr Anderssein; zum erstenmal entfalten sie nicht nur schöpferische Phantasie, sie haben auch jenen nüchternen Blick entwickelt, den Männer für eine typisch männliche Eigenschaft hielten...Natürlich wird Aggression und Angst frei, wenn man alte Bilder -besonders von sich selbst - zerstümmern muss. Aber wir werden uns daran gewöhnen müssen, daß Frauen nicht mehr nur Gleichberechtigung, sondern nach neuen Lebensformen suchen." See also Brigitte Wartmann: "Im Bemühren, Strategien der Befreiung von einem fremden Zurichtungsmuster zu entwickeln, gewinnt das 'Schreiben' von Frauen eine besondere Bedeutung". Quoted in C. Gürtler, *Schreiben Frauen Anders?*, p. 37.

4) According to Vansant's table of the numbers of books sold by Austrian women writers up to November 1984 (pp 11,12), Brigitte Schwaiger's *Wie kommt das Salz ins Meer* in first position with 350,000 copies sold and Ingeborg Bachmann's *Malina* in second position with 131,000 copies (1984).

5) J. Vansant: "In sum, literature implicitly or explicitly feminist rejects the notion of a sex-neutral experience and seeks to change consciousness about women's status by criticising the status quo as well as presenting alternatives." (p.3)

6) S. Lennox, "Feminist Scholarship and Germanistik." In: *The German Quarterly*, Vol. 62, No. 2, 1989: "Feminist literary criticism as a branch of a larger political and cultural movement engaged in the analysis of men's and women's writing, textual portrayals of women, and women's roles in history and education has to date never solved, and often never even addressed, the vexing problem of how engaged literary scholarship contributes to social transformation." (p. 169).

7) J. Vansant, p.4

8) D. Lorenz, "Elfriede Jelinek's Political Feminism: Die Ausgesperrten," p.111: "Marxist-based feminism [is] concerned with systems, means of production, and gender roles resulting from social conditioning. Middle-class feminism with its theoretical link to anthropology and psychology stresses genetic and psychological differences between men and women. Jelinek's aversion to the term feminist may indicate distance from cultural feminism as institutionalised in Women's Studies Programs as well as from feminist critical debates, which address predominantly white middle-class women's concerns.

9) Schwaiger's and Frischmuth's view on feminism contain contradictions fostered by the popular perception of feminism and by their own views on women's issues. While denying alignment with feminism *per se*, Schwaiger perceives 'natural' (i.e. biological) distinctions, whereas Frischmuth sees socio-economic disparity as the core problem. Whilst Schwaiger admits to having been greatly influenced by the classics of the women's movement, she nevertheless maintains: "I am simply not in favour of women having the same rights as men in every respect because men are different from women". Frischmuth locates her feminism in the social sphere... I'm a feminist as far as the laws are concerned" but "on the other hand, the expression feminist is also dangerous because its definition is subject to ups and downs. For the most part it stands for whatever slogans some group of feminists happens to be using at the time. I just can't declare myself in solidarity with a large part of this. In no case is feminism for me separatism". Both authors appear to have been negatively influenced by the media's presentation of feminism and view it as imbued with a strong man-hating component, which they reject. See J. Vansant, *Against the Horizon*, pp. 3-4.
10) The New Women's Movement "erkennt, neben der unbestrittenen generellen Unterdrückung, die beide Geschlechter gemeinsam betrifft - eine weitere frauen spezifische Unterdrückung, die klassen- und schichten-übergreifend alle Frauen reduziert, da ihre Wurzeln nicht im Kapitalismus, sondern im patriarchalischen System liegen". See Brigitte Wartmann Schreiben als Angriff auf das Patriach. Contemporary Women's Emancipatory Literature (i.e. literature which is "implicitly or explicitly feminist [and] rejects the notion of a general sex- neutral cultural experience and seeks to change consciousness about women's status quo as well as presenting alternatives ) is a decisive attempt to fully liberate women from patriarchal stereotypes and to revolutionize the entire concept of womanhood. See J. Vansant, p. 2.

11) D. Lorenz, p. 112.

12) Ibid., p. 112.


14) Jelinek's characters are often easily recognisable caricatures in a true Canettian style. Erika's mother bears a strong resemblance to Therese Krummholz in Canetti's Blendung.


2.8. The Concept of Patriarchal-Capitalism from a Feminist Perspective.


2) Australian Pocket Dictionary, p. 127.

3) L. Tuttle, p. 55.

4) See L. Tuttle, p. 55: Liberal feminists do not challenge capitalism, assuming that its goal - the full equality of women - can be accommodated within a capitalist framework. L. Tuttle, p. 198 - Marxist feminists, who regard both the Radical and the Liberal Feminists as 'Bourgeois' feminists, with a false consciousness, serving the interests of the ruling class, obscuring class differences and hence delaying the revolution, nevertheless failed to recognise that patriarchy works independantly of capitalism, until the formation of the first Marxist-feminist Group in 1973. In the hope of creating a synthesis in view of a new method of understanding and working to overcome all forms of oppression, the M-F1 became "the structural expression of a political and personal tendency: the urge of a considerable number of women, long active in both the women's movement and the
independent left, to integrate the two major aspects of their own political thought and practice.

5) Another issue Jelinek satirises is the influence of the media, in particular of the television, upon its masses of daily viewers, who are led to believe that they are actually partaking or, in the case of game-shows, have a chance at partaking in the lives of the rich and famous, by tuning in religiously: "was haben wir heute wieder gelernt? geben ist seliger als nehmen. auch wenn die richtigen nichts davon kriegen und immer den falschen genommen wird. und noch was merkt euch: wer gleich gibt, gibt doppelt. das hat ingrid heute am eigenen leib erfahren". [M, 66]. In 'A Family Affair' Jelinek portrays Sissy's first 'sex education' from her uncle to shock her readers. [M, 34].
CHAPTER THREE

THE ROLE OF WOMEN'S STEREOTYPES IN THE WORKS OF ELFRIEDE JELINEK, BRIGITTE SCHWAIGER AND BARBARA FRISCHMUTH

3.1. INTRODUCTION

The function of the stereotypes employed by the three authors subject of this study is to criticise, dismantle and demythologise existing ideologies by either exaggerating and destroying them (Jelinek), replacing them with alternatives (Frischmuth), or satirising them to expose the double standards inherent in middle-class ethics (Schwaiger). Not only do the authors succeed in exposing the extent of alienation that occurs between individuals in Western society, they also disclose the inability for individualisation in a society determined by culturally imposed stereotypes.

All three authors, each having had a Catholic upbringing also address the adverse effects of Christianity upon their female protagonists in these works. In this light, the perspective given, is that of a woman, who is indoctrinated with the stereotypical roles sanctioned by the Catholic Church, who is either aware of the potential harm (e.g. Die Klosterschule and sections of Mein Spanisches Dorf) or unaware of it and the narrator brings this issue to light as in the case of Jelinek's works. Although the late works of Frischmuth and Schwaiger tend to ignore the
aspect of religion and to concentrate on the social realities of women's roles, which are indeed all by-products of the Christian influence upon Western morality, Jelinek becomes more radical and places the Church into the hands of its creator, a male undermining the rights of women, who then retaliate, as illustrated in Lust and Krankheit oder Moderne Frauen. The protagonists of these texts both create and destroy life without having fulfilled any significant purpose and in doing so, mirror the universal question of the meaning of life, and indeed, challenge the entire concept of human existence. Not only is death in itself meaningless, so too is life after death, as shown in the latter of these texts.

This chapter will provide an overview of the function of the characters employed in the texts in light of the issues each author wishes to raise, followed by a short text summary and evaluation to introduce the texts studied in Chapter Four.

3.2.1. ELFRIEDE JELINEK

Jelinek's texts draw attention to the systematic destruction of the individual through institutions, popular culture and private homes, all of which function as reinforcements of the relationship between power and ideology. In focusing upon political realities from a Marxist-Feminist perspective, the texts focus upon female victims of a misogynist reality. According to the view reiterated, men consider themselves potential owners of women, heterosexual relationships are doomed and emancipation for women is impossible. In making the dangers of existing myths about heterosexual love transparent, Jelinek portrays the act of copulation as rape for women and totally destroys the traditional views on marriage and domesticity, showing that its basis is purely economical. In allowing "die Sprache selber die Wahrheit sagen zu lassen und der Wirklichkeit einen gewissen Drall oder eine Tendenz der Beschreibung zu geben" (1), Jelinek exposes the social forces which
govern the behaviour and attitude of her protagonists and forces the reader to become aware of the gravity of their misery through the eyes of her infamous "bösen Blick" (2). By using third person narratives and unveiling popular slogans and clichés, Jelinek allows her scepticism with regard to the regeneration of the individual to surface and instead emphasises that her protagonist's struggle is, in each case, a collective and not an individual one.

Another prominent feature in Jelinek's texts is the author's deliberate attempt to escape the cliché of female passivity, as she creates characters, who are equally capable of acting out violence. Although Brigitte and Paula in the first novel Die Liebhaberinnen adhere to the traditional stereotype of working class girls with working class aspirations to a high degree (as Jelinek's intent is to reveal the complex power structure behind the systematic control and subjugation of women's consciousness), their adamant pursuit of Heinz and Erich allows nevertheless a dimension to shine through, which is normally ignored in the portrayal of women in this role. In doing so, Jelinek challenges the roles portrayed by women in trivial romance novels and allows her protagonists to be the active agents in the pursuit.

In her later works Die Klavierspielerin, Lust and Krankheit oder Moderne Frauen, Jelinek takes the traditionally passive image of the woman one step further and challenges the popular misconception that they stand outside the realm of violence. In these texts, Jelinek uncovers the socio-psychological preconditions to violence and aggression and to the manifestations of sexual perversions and suggests that women, as a result of their life-long sexual oppression and constant exposure to violent behaviour in their public and private lives, can also resort to aggression, although of a different nature to that of men (3). By thrusting her female protagonists into the midst of a context, in which they retaliate through acts of violence or sexual perversion, Jelinek revives the historically suppressed 'dark' side of the female psyche, as portrayed in the mythological gorgons of Greek
classical literature. Since the survival of Capitalism in Jelinek's view depends upon the nurturing and maintenance of infantilism in society, the infanticide in *Lust* and *Krankheit oder Moderne Frauen* can be understood as symbolic of the necessary extermination of a capitalist future, as can the patricide and matricide in *Die Ausgesperrten* be understood as that of the necessary annihilation of a fascist past. On another level, these atrocities also serve to reflect the destructive (and self-destructive) elements inherent in a capitalist society and its inevitable collapse.

**DIE LIEBHABERINNEN**

Paula and Brigitte are two teenage girls (fifteen and seventeen years of age respectively) with working-class backgrounds and limited education and no qualifications. They are at an age, where they must secure a future for themselves and of the two choices available to them, factory work and marriage, they choose marriage. During the pursuit of their future husbands and in the hope of being rewarded (Brigitte chooses Heinz, Paula chooses Erich), both girls invest all they have: their bodies. They become subjected to a series of humiliating experiences, before finally marrying the men of their choice. One is a workaholic, the other an alcoholic. Although Heinz is a good provider, he disregards Brigitte as a person with rights and ignores her disgust for him. Erich is a no-hoper, who drinks away his meagre wages and beats Paula to assert his authority at home. In the end, neither woman finds happiness, as both become the victims of a sad and bitter fate. When Erich discovers that Paula is prostituting herself to make ends meet, he 'disowns' her and Paula ends up, where Brigitte began - working in a bra factory.

**EVALUATION**

In this text, Jelinek employs traditional stereotypes to destroy the myth of marital/domestic bliss and motherhood, as they ultimately become the cause of the
protagonists' bitter fate. Brigitte's and Paula's aspirations to reign within their own domestic spheres turn sour - in Paula's case, it is because she never achieves her goal and in Brigitte's, it is because the comfortable lifestyle she does achieve comes at the expense of her self-respect. Heterosexual relationships are doomed from the start, as men regard women as their property, with which they can do as they please and women prostitute themselves before and after marriage, but invest all for nothing. For women, the result is self-contempt and bitterness and for men anger and frustration as a result of a lifestyle, in which they are both trapped. Thus, Jelinek mirrors the vicious cycle of capitalist society, in which neither sex is able to transcend the limitations of the class, into which they are born. Yet, although men are also portrayed as victims, women are portrayed as being worse off than men, as they are victims within every avenue of their public and private lives (5). Having been conditioned to believe that they are dispensable, inter-sexual rivalry is strong amongst women and solidarity impossible, whilst for men, solidarity (i.e. mateship) is possible, as common interests amongst men within a specific context are socially sanctioned.

**DIE KLASIERSPIELERIN**

Erika Kohut is almost forty years old, but still lives with her domineering mother in a small rented apartment in Vienna. She teaches piano at the conservatorium and in the little time she has to herself, leads a double-life centred upon voyeurism and self-mutilation. After one of her young students, Walter Klemmer, shows an interest in her, Erika responds by writing him a letter, in which she divulges her perverted sexual fantasies. Klemmer is repulsed by Erika's letter and brutally rapes her. Erika pursues Klemmer with a knife, but instead of stabbing him, stabs herself and returns home to her mother.
EVALUATION

In this text, Jelinek addresses the issues of women's sexual oppression and subjection to a fascist upbringing, which, according to the author are still prevalent in Austrian and German cultures (4). Moreover, she exposes the myth surrounding the traditional image of the artist as being one, whose creative genius transcends the boundaries of a socially sanctioned existence to produce great works of art, but instead, discloses the systematic destruction of the artist's potential for self-expression to sacrifice his/her talent for an economic end. Erika Kohut is the victim of her upbringing in every sense, as her mother has complete control over her private, social and professional life. For Mrs. Kohut, motherhood is a life-long investment to be rewarded by personal and financial security on her daughter's part. Her tight reign within her domestic quarters denies both her daughter and herself the physical and emotional comforts of a good homelife, transforming it into a prison-like existence. Erika's frustration, as a result of her powerlessness and forced self-restraint manifests itself in a perverted sense of self- and sexual expression. Having been forced to sacrifice her life for her art, Erika is physically and emotionally dependant upon her mother and totally unable to deal with the outside world. When a chance to escape presents itself to her in the form of Walter Klemmer, Erika is too naiv to recognise the real motive behind his advances and falls prey to the sexual aggression, typical of Jelinek's male characters, which he, in turn, justifies through her inability to conform to the traditional female stereotype.

LUST

Gerti is the physically and emotionally abused wife of a wealthy factory owner with an insatiable appetite for sex. Hermann's perverted and humiliating sexual
practices drive Gerti to alcoholism and an extra-marital affair with a lover (Michael), who proves to be no different to Gerti's husband. After being gang-raped by Michael's friends, then bashed and raped repeatedly by Hermann, Gerti asphyxiates her sleeping son (whom the father habitually dopes) and plunges his body into a nearby lake.

EVALUATION

As wife and property of a wealthy factory owner and mother of the son and heir to the father's 'throne', Gerti portrays the victim at the top end of the capitalist power structure. The 'depersonalised' nature of employer - employee relations is mirrored in the relationship between Hermann and Gerti, in which Gerti is reduced to an object of her husband's will. Thus, in her role of wife, Gerti portrays the typical Jelinek heroine, for whom financial security comes at the expense of personal humiliation, degradation and subjection to aggressive sexual acts. In her role of housekeeper and mother, Gerti portrays the traditional stereotype, being both a good housewife and a loving mother to her son. After realising there is no escape, neither for herself nor for her son, who gives every indication of becoming just like his father, Gerti puts an end to the cycle of abuse, in which they are both trapped.

WAS GESCHAH NACHDEM NORA IHREN MANN VERLASSEN HATTE?

Nora, the heroine of Ibsen's *A Doll's House*, obtains work as factory worker, because she has no qualifications. As the ex-wife of a successful businessman, Nora is singled out by her boss, who speculates that she can entice Weygang, a wealthy business magnate, into making a lucrative deal. Weygang is indeed impressed after watching Nora dance the 'Tarantella' and, being informed of her background, asks her to become his mistress. Weygang uses Nora to help him destroy Helmer and discards her after Helmer goes bankrupt. After working in a
brothel, Nora takes up Weygang's offer to run a small fabric business and returns to her husband.

EVALUATION

Jelinek's negative view with regard to the emancipatory potential of both bourgeois and working class women is directly addressed in this play. With the limited options available to the heroine of Ibsen's 1879 play *A Doll's House*, Jelinek picks up where Ibsen left off, deliberately destroying the illusion of a successful emancipation for women, then as today. Instead, Jelinek portrays the reality of women's situation in Western society. Although Nora views factory work as a means to economic independence and personal autonomy, she is exploited at work and at home and then compensated with a modest pay-off (like Therese Krummholz in Elias Canetti's *Blendung*), being ultimately forced to renounce her ideals and return to her husband. Thus, Nora's options are no different to those of Paula and Brigitte, as her worth, too, reflects that of the man she beds and her fate that of the cycle in which she is trapped.

KRANKHEIT ODER MODERNE FRAUEN

After Cannilla comes into Heidkliff's surgery to give birth to her sixth child and dies, she is transformed into a vampire by the vampire/lesbian/writer/nurse Emily, who is also the dentist/gynaecologist's fiancée. The women then kill Carmilla's children and drink their blood. They undergo one further transformation into a grotesque Medusa-like figure, sitting amongst waste and rotting garbage, before being exterminated by their 'environmentally-friendly' partners.

EVALUATION

In this play, Jelinek radically reverses and destroys the roles of the female stereotypes presented. Emily, Heidkliff's fiancée, nurse and writer is in fact a lesbian, a vampire and a *Schriftverstellerin* (5). Carmilla, wife, mother and
homemaker, transforms into a lesbian vampire, like Emily, and then devours her six children. Heidkliff and Hundekoffer are totally oblivious of others. A scientist to the extreme, Heidkliff is self-obsessed and intense, viewing his patients as guinea pigs to satisfy his quest for knowledge. In a similar vein, Hundekoffer regards everything in terms of facts and figures and would readily sacrifice another in the name of progress. By committing infanticide, the two women reverse their traditional roles as nurse (Emily) and mother (Carmilla), thus taking rather than giving and sustaining life. The transformation into vampires and bodily union of Emily and Carmilla defies the purpose of womanhood (socio-politically, as well as aesthetically) and Heidkliff and Hundekoffer therefore have no qualms about exterminating it.

SUMMARY OF STEREOTYPES

1) Female stereotypes are methodically dismantled, male stereotypes are predominantly exaggerations of the norm.

2) Men are victims of the socio-economic hierarchy, but superior to the women 'belonging' to them.

3) Women are reduced to bodies, owned by men. They are double victims - of socio-economic circumstances and of men.

4) Women are objects of men and rivals to other women, both aspects crippling inter-personal relationships.

5) Women lack self-identity and self-worth and this as such obstructs emancipation.
3.2.2. BRIGITTE SCHWAIGER

Brigitte Schwaiger shows neither alternatives, nor is she as radical as Jelinek in her dismantlement of prominent stereotypes. She rather exposes the underlying reasons for her protagonists' unhappiness, removing the facade around their apparently happy lives. In challenging middle-class values, ethics and ways of reasoning, Schwaiger penetrates the outer shell of respectability and enters into the inner network of inter-familial, inter-social and inter-personal relationships, in which friction, prejudice, injustice and inequality prevail. The protagonists of Wie kommt das Salz ins Meer and Lange Abwesenheit disclose not only a sharp wit but also an acute sense of awareness, as they satirise the strict code of law, according to which fathers and husbands rule over their clan and with a stirring naivete, they challenge the values they have been taught to accept, upsetting the power balance and, more importantly, alerting the reader to the double standards, which constitute an integral part of Western ideology. Like Frischmuth's heroines, Schwaiger's heroines undergo a process of self-discovery and become much more aware of themselves, but unlike Frischmuth's heroines, they are not assertive enough to succeed in creating a viable alternative, nor in establishing an identity on their own.

WIE KOMMT DAS SALZ INS MEER

The protagonist of this text marries a man she no longer loves. She becomes increasingly depressed and has an affair with Albert, her husband's best friend. After falling pregnant to Albert and undergoing an abortion, initiated and performed by him, she disentangles the web, in which she is trapped and finds the strength to sever her ties, despite the overwhelming opposition and moral condemnation of her private and social environment.
EVALUATION

The retrospective account of the protagonist's failed marriage is written with honesty, directness, biting humour and emotional detachment. The subversive messages in the text are obvious, as they disclose the powerful network of male superiority, beginning in the home and extending throughout the entire social network. The protagonist, who is at the beginning of the novel, not assertive enough to prevent her own marriage from taking place, becomes, at the end, assertive enough to withstand both public and personal humiliation.

MEIN SPANISCHES DORF

This text contains extracts from the diary of a young girl and then young woman, as she experiences her childhood and life as a divorcee in a small country town, in which her father is a renowned doctor. Having attended a Catholic school and having been indoctrinated with middle-class values and ideals, she is regarded as the black sheep in the family, because of her later rebellion and consequent status as an adultress and divorcee.

EVALUATION

In the description of her childhood, her middle-class, Catholic upbringing, the protagonist exposes the pettiness and pretentiousness of a bourgeois existence. Discrimination against race (Jews), class (working class) and status (poverty) is the norm and the protagonist's father, who epitomises bourgeois-Nazi ideology, is the most adamant propogator of such ideals. The title Mein Spanisches Dorf speaks for itself, for, in the eyes of the protagonist, everything is 'spanisch' (dubious) and her inquisitive disposition will not allow her to simply accept things, as they are presented to her.
LANGE ABWESENHEIT

Through a series of flashbacks at her father's graveside, the ailing relationship between father and daughter and the extent to which the daughter is affected by this, even after her father's death, is recaptured. Despite the fact, that the protagonist's father is strict, uncompromising, distant and unforgiving and does not want to establish a relationship with his daughter, neither before nor after she leaves home, she still loves and admires him and hopes for reconciliation. She recollects her affair with Birer, her Jewish lover, with whom she hoped to rebell against her father, in his contempt for Jews. She remembers her father being terminally ill, but still resisting her advances. He dies without asking for her, with which the protagonist is still trying to come to terms. But the protagonist's conflicting feelings for her father remain unresolved.

EVALUATION

In contrast to Wie kommt das Salz ins Meer and Mein Spanisches Dorf, the tone in Lange Abwesenheit is melancholic. Schwaiger depicts a relationship of alienation, that arouses in the protagonist a deep sense of regret. Her failed attempts to either rebel against her father or win his love exposes the void in father-daughter relationships, because of polarised sex-role conditioning, a behavioural pattern that determines the nature of all future heterosexual relationships.

SCHÖNES LICHT

Schönes Licht relates the story of a young writer in search of love. Christine is an award-winning writer, who lives and works in Vienna. During the course of the novel, she has several relationships, none of which work out. The protagonist becomes increasingly disillusioned with life and prone to depression and thoughts of suicide. Yet, even after every relationship fails, Christine still hopes for the right man to come along, with whom she can find true happiness.
EVALUATION

Although an award-winning writer, Christine is insecure among her more mature male co-workers, because of her age and her sex, making her both vulnerable and exploitable, reflecting the typical situation in an office setting upon the arrival of a 'new girl'. Whilst Christine handles her professional life reasonably well, her quest for personal fulfillment is, in the end, crippling to her emotionally. On the one hand, she desperately wants to belong, but on the other, she shuns being moulded according to others' expectations. Her relentless pursuit of true love exposes the difficulties women face when involved with a man and remaining true to themselves. Schwaiger nevertheless does not extinguish the little glimmer of hope left for successful heterosexual relationships.

SUMMARY OF STEREOTYPES

1) Women are unhappy in their relationships with men. Men are oblivious to their unhappiness.
2) The protagonists come from middle-class backgrounds and are either married to or involved with an educated professional, who is insensitive, arrogant and lacks concern for others.
3) Men find solace in their profession and in mateship, women dwell on interpersonal relationships with men and do not seek solidarity with other women.
4) Women feel unfulfilled in their traditional roles. They either suppress these feelings or complain about them, but do not look for alternatives.
5) Women feel insecure about pursuing untraditional or unconventional professions because of the pressure exerted upon them because of their sex.

3.2.3. BARBARA FRISCHMUTH

Frischmuth's alternative role models, as portrayed by her protagonists, provide the reader with valuable insight into the pros and cons of various lifestyles and settings and their consequences. Frischmuth shows that the oppressive factor is essentially the restrictive nature of traditional stereotypes, which destroy a sense of
selfhood and the necessary scope for modulation, which is eminent to relationships between individuals, groups of individuals and the individual and society. Her first novel *Die Klosterschule* deals with the systematic destruction of a woman's selfhood and exposes the dangers of the categorical rejection of any deviation from the norm and how it not only severely hinders the process of personal development, but also, from a feminist perspective, obstructs women's self-definition - with regard to their sexuality and their social roles. Frischmuth's later works revolve almost entirely around relationships within untraditional and relatively unexplored dimensions of womanhood. In these works, Frischmuth deals with the affects and after-effects of inter-personal relationships and their break-ups, she examines the issues of sole parenting and alternative family and living arrangements, focussing in particular upon the emotional state of the protagonist. Frischmuth believes, that women must fight for the liberation of their sex rather than for their sexual liberation (1) and this issue is transparent in her works. Frischmuth's protagonists articulate the problems inherent in women's quest for self-definition, as they indeed exist. Her protagonists are usually single women or single mothers, who are economically independent and in search of personal fulfilment. They are either involved in a relationship, which usually terminates during the course of the novel or between two relationships, the first of which proves unsuccessful and the second highly promising. Frischmuth's mothers take on the challenge of child-rearing alone, without however rejecting the prospect of a father or father-figure, who can provide the child with positive male image. For Frischmuth, giving birth to a child and giving birth to a literary work compliment and enhance one another. Her conviction that children are social, not private beings is a major point in her novels *Kai und die Liebe zu den Modellen* and *Die Ferienfamilie* and touched upon in *Bindungen*, as she regards the role of child-rearing a social and not a private
obligation. Her protagonist Amy Stern, alias Amarillis Sternweiser, best reflects the author's philosophy in view of her search for alternatives:

Ich habe einfach den Drang nach Alternativen zu suchen. Nach Lebensweisen, die unseren ähnlich sind, ihnen aber nicht entsprechen. Ich will aus dem Finden anderer Modelle, ob die nun aus der Biologie oder aus der Philosophie stammen, lernen können. [A, 246]

and, as Amarillis Sternweiser before her reincarnation into Amy Stern, the author's belief, that women and children should play a greater role in social change:

Wir können aber auch die Gestalt ihrer Frauen und Kinder annehmen und die Macht neu verteilen, daß sie keine Gefahr mehr für die Welt bedeutet. [SS, 315]

The ability to change is a strong message, not only in the trilogy, but also in her subsequent novels. All the protagonists must learn to readjust to circumstances and conditions, which either intervene or somehow govern their destinies. Frischmuth conveys to her readers that concepts like flexibility, compromise, modulation of behaviour and expectations are all keys to creating a better understanding and tolerance between and amongst individuals. Change is subject to evolution and not revolution, so children play a major role. Thus, the fact that both Sophie Silber (Klemens' mother) and Amy have sons and not daughters, not only suggests a clean break from the von Weitersleben family tradition of maintaining a matriarch (as in all of the previous generations, the single mothers had daughters), but also an obvious escape from the feminist trap of creating a female utopia. Although Klemens adopts traditional views, due to his traditional upbringing in a foster home, there is every indication that Kai will be more open to alternatives and present a positive role model for the next generation. Frischmuth does not pretend to have the perfect formula for world peace or inter-personal relationships and does not ignore the many conflicts and problems that arise, but she does show the reader
that alternatives are possible and that to be continually blinded by the confined and biased nature of conventional stereotypes will only prevent global understanding.

**KAI UND DIE LIEBE ZU DEN MODELLEN**

Amy, writer and single mother of five-year old Kai, is attempting to create an alternative family setting, in which all involved parties contribute equally and take equal responsibility. Having realised that Kai's father, Klemens, is unwilling make a commitment under these terms, she decides to bring up Kai on her own. The opportunity to sever all ties to Klemens presents itself when he leaves town for professional reasons. Although this proves to be a painful and heartbreaking decision for Amy, she realises that if she were to follow Klemens, she would inevitably fall into the trap of marriage and domesticity and her career as a writer would suffer. Herwater, Amy's next suitor, proves to be a much more compatible match and although there is no fixed relationship between them at the end of the novel, there is every indication that they are destined to be together.

**EVALUATION**

Frischmuth paints a multi-faceted picture of the female artist, in that she is sensitive, intelligent, warm, dedicated and enjoys her profession, but at the same time, feels alienated from society because of her unconventional role. In portraying Amy's struggle for selfhood, the reader gains insight into the emotional highs and lows and into the joys and set-backs women in her situation experience. Frischmuth neither portrays motherhood nor a career as the ultimate fulfilment, but rather the successful fusion of both. The egalitarian relationship Amy aims to develop with her son reflects one of the major themes evident in many of Frischmuth's works, not only between generations, but between the sexes (Herwater-Amy), between cultures (Kai's 'minders' are Turkish children) and between classes (Amy promotes Kai's friendship with 'Gastarbeiter' children).
Herwater is the only positive male role model in the text. Like Amy, he has assumed a human form (in the first part of the trilogy, he was the water spirit Wasserman) and thus is aware of the possibility of an alternative world, in which equality and harmony with nature reign. Klemens is a theatre critic, too ambitious and too self-centered to adapt to the needs of others. His love for Amy and Kai can only survive under his conditions and these, in turn, are tailored only to suit his own needs.

**DIE FERIENFAMILIE**

Nora plans to divide the two-month summer vacation between her work and her son, Pu, when ex-husband and Pu's father asks her to take Fenek, his son from his first wife and her sister asks her to take her daughter, Laia. Fenek, the oldest of the children, is more aware of the unconventional nature of this family holiday and suggests to the others that they pretend to belong to the same nuclear family, in order to avoid lengthy interrogations by the locals. During the course of the holiday, each child learns to adjust, not only to their holiday family situation, but also to their new family situation at home. Fenek, whose problems are dealt with in more detail than those of the other characters, finally comes to terms with his ambivalent feelings towards his mother (resentment for having abandoned him and love for her as his mother) and decides to join her in Australia, where she is remarried, rather than remain in Austria with his father and wife number three. Nora, who had anticipated an entirely different kind of a holiday, is in the end grateful for the enrichment this holiday experience has given her. She also meets Lajosch, an old school friend, and love rekindles. Although the events in this novel and particularly its ending appear somewhat contrived (e.g. Fenek has an accident,
his mother takes the next plane to be at his side and all ends well), it is the interpersonal relationships that ultimately constitute the charm of this novel.

EVALUATION

Compromise, understanding, emotional support and genuine caring are the messages contained in this novel. During this holiday, Nora learns much about children's abilities of dealing with new and unconventional situations and a close friendship develops between Nora and the children as well as amongst the children themselves. Quality time results in a greater mutual understanding and compassion for each other's emotional needs and at the end of the holiday, each character is prepared to face a new chapter in their life.

BINDUNGEN

Fanny has come to live at her sister's country house to recover from a nervous breakdown. Whilst there, she wins over her sister's husband, Jakob, son, Zeno, and the family dog. Upon realising, that her career is her true destiny, Fanny returns to Vienna.

EVALUATION

Again, the situation is unconventional. The protagonist steps inside her sister's shoes to experience a lifestyle she had forgone in the pursuit of her career. Yet, Frischmuth's intention is not to sensationalise, but to divulge the complexities of life experiences and the learning process individuals undergo to give them a new sense of identity and self-worth. As a single and childless female archeologist working in a male-dominated field, renamed 'Max' by her colleague to make him
feel more at ease, Fanny is searching for her identity as a woman; through Fanny, Frischmuth exposes the inner conflict and resultant insecurities professional women working in a male-dominated field experience and must learn to overcome. The correlation between archeology and the protagonist's search for self is poignant, as is the irony in the fact that archeology (i.e. pre-history) is a male-dominated profession. Unlike the Fanny in Bachmann's tale, Frischmuth's Fanny survives her ordeal (2).

SUMMARY OF STEREOTYPES

1) All of the texts are didactic and as such, display the growing process of the protagonists in search of a new identity.

2) Women are frequently single working mothers, who care about both their profession and their children. They must thus adopt new models in order to function in both areas. They are either divorced or unmarried.

3) Women can also be career-oriented and are able to put relationships in second place. They can be single and childless or a single parent.

4) Women's roles project alternative role models, which are not only much more complex, but also much more sympathetically portrayed than those of men.

5) Men's roles adhere more to traditional role models, according to which career and self-realisation comes before family and others. Fathers are either absent or participate rarely in family life. Only Malwine's husband, Jakob, spends time with his wife and son, but he also abuses their trust in another sense.

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER THREE

3.2.1. ELFRIEDE JELINEK


2) C. Gürtler, *Der böse Blick der Elfriede Jelinek*, p. 50.

3) S. Berka, p. 147.
4) Ibid., p. 136.


3.2.3. BARBARA FRISCHMUTH

1) See J. Serke, Frauen Schreiben, p. 33.

2) The character of Fanny was probably inspired by Ingeborg Bachmann's Der Fall Franza. Requiem für Fanny Goldmann, an archeologist in search of her identity.
4.1. WOMEN'S ROLES IN THE FAMILY, SOCIETY AND THE CHURCH.

The nuclear family structure is a social artefact constructed for the purpose of determining paternity and inducing order and cohesion within the smallest group of co-habiting individuals, so that they in turn extend the notions of solidarity and conformity to the larger social group of co-existing individuals, the community, who likewise share a common cultural, religious and national heritage. Taking into account that the crux to the problem of inequality in any given society is based upon the criterion of evaluation forming its structural hierarchy and order of preference, it is not the fact that women, as a result of their biological difference and hence life-giving role, are inherently inferior to men, but the fact that at some given point in history, they have been reduced to and accepted as having an inferior status and that this has now been integrated into what we consider 'social reality'.

Equality amongst the sexes can therefore not occur until women's biological and intellectual equality is reinstated. Since women are not in the position to implement a change politically (for the political leaders are predominantly men), they must resort to other avenues, one of which being literature, to generate change by means of heightening social awareness with regard to such issues. An effective literary tactic is that of challenging the pervasive ideologies regarding gender roles and unveiling many of the myths connected with it. The subsequent texts do just this,
as they both challenge and demystify many of the 'normative' roles of women within the family and present them from a different perspective.

In dealing with such issues, the authors highlight specific aspects, that are either ignored or idealised, even in emancipated literary works and create images of women, which, at different levels, deviate from the norm and directly challenge the status quo. The images of women in this study predominantly revolve around the private lives of the protagonists and the problems they encounter, either as a result of the position they hold within their domestic environment as wives, mothers or daughters or as a result of one they are attempting to create. These, in turn, reflect the position of women in society, due to the inextricable link between social, political and religious institutions.

In the texts *Die Liebhaberinnen, Lust* and *Wie kommt das Salz ins Meer*, Jelinek and Schwaiger recreate the role of the housewife-wife within the traditional family setting. Their aim is to elucidate these roles as those of sex object, property of their husband and unpaid domestic servant. The wives in the texts are all oppressed by their husbands, their situation mirroring the traditional ideology, according to which the husband, as family head and breadwinner, has complete control.

Since alternative family structures are no longer unique, due to the high rate of divorce and single-parenting, Frischmuth's heroines in *Kai und die Liebe zu den Modellen* and *Die Ferienfamilie* provide alternative role models of the unmarried or divorced single mother. The texts also allow some degree of insight into the precarious role of the biological father, whose status and social identity has inevitably been affected since he is no longer directly involved with the family (no longer being family head or, in either of the above cases, main economic provider), without however providing a feasible solution to the modern male's dilemma in regard to his sudden 'disposability'. Frischmuth does however provide a positive
role model of the surrogate father, who is willing to share the responsibilities the natural father has forgone.

Similarly, many women choose not to marry at all and Frischmuth's *Bindungen* portrays the unattached, career-oriented woman, as does Schwaiger's *Schönes Licht*. In each case, the degree to which the protagonist can be regarded as a positive role model depends upon how well she is able to balance her career with her private life. Each of the protagonists, however, has both good and bad qualities and, in that light, the texts can be considered didactic.

Jelinek's *Die Klavierspielerin* and Schwaiger's *Lange Abwesenheit* provide the role of the daughter in view of mother-daughter and father-daughter relationships and expose the destructive effect of the daughter's powerlessness within the family situation. Apart from the lesbian vampires, Emily and Carmilla, in Jelinek's *Krankheit oder Moderne Frauen* and one brief interlude in Frischmuth's *Kai und die Liebe zu den Modellen*, in which the heroine, Amy Stern, is confronted with the option of engaging in a lesbian relationship but declines, all of the protagonists are involved in heterosexual relationships. In Jelinek's and Schwaiger's texts, these relationships are non-productive, whilst in Frischmuth's texts, the non-productive relationships are superseded with productive ones. It is similarly the case with friendships. Whilst friendships both between and amongst the sexes are possible with Frischmuth, they are not at all possible with Jelinek and only minimally so with Schwaiger.

Three crucial stages of consciousness-raising tactics in order to initiate change can be detected in the above literary texts. The first and most fundamental one is that of the heroine's practical experience, whilst it is only the narrator, who is capable of rationalising (Jelinek), the second is the heroine herself registering her experiences and challenging the status quo (Schwaiger) and the third is that of the heroine creating workable alternative role models (Frischmuth).
The study will begin with Frischmuth's text *Die Klosterschule* which concentrates upon the socialisation of young girls in preparation for their future roles as wives and mothers and conclude with Jelinek's *Krankheit oder Moderne Frauen*, the most controversial of the texts in this study.

### 4.2 THE PROCESS OF SOCIALISATION OF YOUNG GIRLS: BARBARA FRISCHMUTH'S *DIE KLOSTERSCHULE*

The socialisation of the young is a chief contribution to the basic patriarchal ideology of male superiority by birthright. Millett calls it a most ingenious form of inner colonisation, affecting temperament, role and status, whereby 'temperament' can be understood as the psychological component, involving the formation of human personality along stereotyped lines of sex category (masculine and feminine), which are based on the needs and values of the dominant group and dictated by what its members cherish in themselves and find convenient in subordinates; 'sex role' as the sociological component, that decrees a consonant and highly elaborate code of conduct, gesture and attitude, assigning domestic service and attendance upon infants to women and the rest of human achievement to men and 'status' as the political component that allocates power to a ruling class (1). The interrelated patriarchal institutions then culminate in the church, the Christian precept of a male deity reinforcing and perpetrating the ideology of male dominance and superiority. Frischmuth's text *Die Klosterschule* concerns itself with the socialisation of young girls in preparation for their future roles as housewives and mothers in the family, as mediators of social distress in society and as the embodiment of evil in the church. The text is short, but concise and the content subversive, focussing on the patterns of behaviour and clichés and on the norms and imperatives with which these young girls are being inculcated. Although
essentially autobiographical, the parodistic style and biting satire of the author can only result from the maturity and insight of an adult, writing in retrospect of her own childhood experiences.

There are fourteen anecdotal chapters, each dealing with one theme in particular, with other themes from other chapters subtly interwoven. The book itself caused a major uproar when first published in 1968, because of its harsh criticism of the Catholic education system, in which "hypocrisy, subordination and repression of natural feelings are the primary values" (2) which deprive masses of innocent and impressionable young girls of ever developing a sense of selfhood and a need for self-expression. In effect, this mutation of women's intellectual and sexual maturity, from a feminist perspective, perpetuates the power differential between the sexes and often remains with them throughout life.

The convent girls are taught to be subservient, to repress their sexuality and remain chaste, pure and humble and, above all, to fear God. They are strictly forbidden to engage in sexual promiscuity or homosexual relationships, to be loud, outspoken, demanding or defiant. Thus, 'good' and 'evil' reflect 'following the teachings of the Catholic Church' or 'going astray', the ultimate good being that of choosing celibacy and becoming a nun. With a certain naivety that contains an underlying bite, Frischmuth unveils the double-standards with regard to men's and women's behaviour in the chapter entitled Die Anstandsstunde. This chapter revolves around the preparation of young girls for their future roles as wives and mothers and involves a lesson teaching the girls how to obtain a husband without crossing the borderlines of acceptable and respectable passive, feminine behaviour:

Versucht ein Mann sich euch zu nähern, in welcher Absicht es auch sein möge - in geschlossenen Raum oder im Freien - senkt vorerst den Blick, ihr gewinnt dadurch Zeit, nachzudenken. Schon aus dem Gehaben, mit dem er auf sich aufmerksam macht, geht hervor, welche Art von Vergnügen er von eurer Bekanntschaft erwartet...Solange er euch keinen Antrag macht, müßt ihr euch strenge Zurückhaltung auferlegen....Wenn es euch ernsthaft darum zu tun ist, ihn euch vollends verbindlich zu machen, und der Eindruck, den er in euch hinterlassen hat, sich nicht
verflüchtigt, so sollt ihr euch gewisser Gesten bedienen, die ihn unfehlbar für euch einnehmen müssen. Zeigt ihm, daß ihr sparsam mit seinem Geld umgehen wollt, indem ihr vorderhand in seiner Gegenwart auf Süßigkeiten jeder Art verzichtet, auch wenn er sie euch anbietet - es ist gut für eure Figur und beweist, daß ihr nicht verwöhnt seid...bekreuzigt euch vor jeder Kirche und vor jedem Bildstock, an dem ihr zufällig vorbeikommt -gerade eure rührende Frömmigkeit wird ihm etwas bieten, das er vielleicht seit den Kindertagen vermissen mußte-, greift bei den gemeinsamen Spaziergängen recht oft nach den Schöpfen spielender Kinder und streichelst sie - dies zeigt ihm so manches...und zeigt euch stets um sein Wohlergehen bemüht, wobei ihr aber nicht überstreiten sollt, es könnte ihm lästig fallen oder euch späterhin zu Nachteil gereichen. [K, 35, 38/9].

The girls learn that women are subordinate to men and that a woman's identity is attained through her husband. Marriage is thus a girl's primary vocation in life and, as such, her first priority upon leaving school. They are warned that an unmarried woman, of marriageable age, living in the outside world, is not viewed positively. An old maid is an object of ridicule, as is a woman who engages in sex without marriage or outside marriage. Education is important, yet subordinate to marriage, for a 'good' wife never outshines her husband. Sexual promiscuity is a sin for women, but not so much for men and a woman must always find it in her heart to forgive an adulterous husband. She must respect, honour and obey her husband, always remain humble and teach her children to do the same. As far as women's roles in society are concerned, they are taught that, in effect, they are only extensions of their roles in the family, whereby women must again put the interests of others above their own:

Wir haben Rücksicht zu nehmen, auf den Nächsten, auf die anderen, auf die Gemeinschaft...Wir sind weder die ersten noch die letzten: lauter brauchbare Leute: der beste Beweis dafür ist das Leben. Auf Menschen wie uns ist die Welt angewiesen...Bescheiden im Herzen...Persönlich bedürfnislos, werden wir - so Gott will- doch vieles zu unserer Verfügung haben. Wir werden mit denen, die dies verdienen, teilen und für diejenigen, die ohne Hoffnung sind, beten. Hinter uns wird unsere Mutter, die Kirche, und über alles der allmächtige Vater, Gott, stehen, und es gibt nichts, was wir mit solcher Hilfe nicht zu meistem imstande wären. Zu leugnen, daß dies mit mancherlei Schmerz verbunden ist, steht in niemandes Absicht. Wir werden an unseren Kindern nicht anders handeln, so wir nicht abtrünnig werden und vergessen, woher wir kommen. Wer die Gefahr sucht, kommt darin um. Wir sollen daher stets den Umgang mit unseresgleichen pflegen, auf das wir nie den Schutz der Gemeinschaft, deren Glied wir sind, verlieren. Es kommt auf alle an, denn auch in der Zahl liegt eine Stärke. Nicht umsonst heißt Christus der
Obedience training is thus a focal point in the indoctrination. Convent rules are rigid and failure to comply is severely punished. There are no exceptions to the rule. Levity in attitude leads to levity in willpower, which leads to temptation. Discipline is therefore a must, as is self-discipline and a strong will to resist evil. The regimentary walks the girls undertake on a daily basis, as described in the chapter *Spazierengehen* train them towards compliancy:


In the eyes of the Church, women embody evil by virtue of their cyclical affinity with nature, which makes them by their very 'nature' impure (3):


The 'blood' element therefore leads to contradictions within the Christian doctrine. On the one hand, it symbolises the ultimate sacrifice (the blood of Jesus on the cross), but on the other, it symbolises womanhood and her unity with nature (by virtue of her menstrual cycle), which, according to biblical references to Eve
and her role in the the Fall of mankind, symbolises evil. Because of the original sin committed by Eve, the redemption of women can only come about via asceticism and devout servititude to God, who will reward them in their afterlife:

Although this text is not about a woman discovering and affirming her selfhood, as are Frischmuth's later works, the emancipatory intent of the author is unmistakably clear. The text can be understood as "a satirical barb at the absurdity and detrimental affects of the dogmatic and authoritarian training imparted to young women, (which are) based not on human decency, but on manipulation and calculation" (4) and which postulate their subordination throughout all major spheres of life -in the home, in society and in the church. Indeed, one of the most poignant stylistic means by which Frishmuth undermines the validity of what is being said and exposes the discrepancy between the manner of speaking and the content is the fact that she does not allow the narrator to emerge very clearly at all. (5)
4.3.1 DESTROYING THE MYTHS OF LOVE AND MARRIAGE: BRIGITTE SCHWAIGER'S WIE KOMMT DAS SALZ INS MEER

This text serves as a paragon of the feminist perspective of married life for a young, middle-class housewife from its ceremonial beginnings to its bitter end in a divorce court. Schwaiger penetrates the fragile, outer shell of middle-class values and shows how destructive they are to women, how stifling they are to their very existence and how intimidating key words, such as gutbürgerlich, anständig and tüchtig can be in view of women's social conditioning. Schwaiger exposes the sham behind the ideological concept of marriage (love union, life-long partnership), challenging the status quo each and every step of the way from parental home to altar, from wedding ceremony to wedding night, from honeymoon to homelife as wife and housewife and then finally to separation and divorce, gradually raising the protagonist's consciousness (who, by having no name, represents an exemplary case) to the point where she directly confronts and takes on the authorities.

As this indeed 'normal' marital relationship unveils, the political configuration to heterosexual relations, which extends beyond legislative bodies, political parties and governments (1) still imminently presides in the domestic realm regardless of feminist consciousness-raising tactics and even a modern, well-educated husband continues to expect his wife to adhere to her traditional role, in which she shapes her life entirely around his needs and expectations. Unlike the raw, physical and unorthodox cruelty of Gerti's husband (Lust) or the simple, uneducated and straightforward cruelty of Heinz and Erich (Die Liebhaberinnen), the husband in this text employs a subtle and much more sophisticated form of abuse towards his wife, which is equally demeaning.

The scenes, written in retrospect and witnessed from within the mind of the slightly disguised persona of the author, are nevertheless filtered through a controlling objective narrative consciousness which retains its distance by observing events from a viewpoint different from that of the narrator-persona. It is
precisely the interplay between the naive self, which accepts a socially imposed role and the reflective, monitoring self, which recognises discrepancies that leads to the protagonist's emancipation, as the influence of the monitoring self gradually emerges as dominant (2).

Schwaiger's narrative begins prior to the wedding ceremony, as the bride's father, mother and grandmother are dressing up for the same occasion, they had previously defined as "nur eine Formalität" [S, 9], the text itself beginning with 'gutbürgerlich', which is again repeated within the sentence:


Blinded by the middle-class values of her family, who in their role as educators echo Klosterschule educators, employing words such as 'tüchtig', 'anständig' and 'gutbürgerlich', when referring to Rolf (i.e. he meets their highest approval), and having internalised their values to such a degree that she distrusts her own instincts, the protagonist agrees to marry Rolf. Like the Klosterschule girls, she too has been conditioned into believing that proper women marry: "Eine Frau ohne Mann, was ist das schon?" [S, 41], in order to become socially acceptable: "Ich wollte ja immer dazugehören." [S, 158], and to obtain an identity, in this case replacing the identity she was given through her father with one of a social equal:
Und als ich in Wien inskribierte, da kannte niemand meinen Vater...ich war nicht mehr ich, nur noch irgendeine...und da kam Rolf, der mich wiedererkannte, er wußte wer ich war, und mit ihm mußte ich schlafen, weil es so richtig war. [S, 31]

The extent of the protagonist's class-conscious conditioning, which is the reason she chooses Rolf over Karl (3), comes to light in the following extract from her childhood (4):

Ich war ein besonderes Kind. Ich trug einen grünen Mantel mit runden Knöpfen, wir gingen einen grünen Weg entlang, Mutter und ich, in ein Haus zu anderen Leuten, mit kleineren Fenstern, es waren ärmere Menschen, die sofort erkannten, daß es eine Ehre war, Mutter und mich empfangen zu dürfen, weil wir zu Vater gehörten, und Vater war der wichtigste Mann in der Stadt, er machte alle Leute gesund, er rettete vielen Menschen das Leben. Die Menschen wurden in zwei Gruppen eingeteilt: unsere Patienten, die guten, und nicht unsere Patienten, die schlechten. Ich wußte, daß es außer Menschen noch was anderes gab, die Ärzte, und meine Freundinnen waren Arztkinder, wir fuhren auf Ärztekongresse nach Italien.... [S, 31]

But the protagonist's experiences with Rolf prior to the wedding create a change of heart. Rolf treats her like a child, chastising or comforting her, depending upon the situation and the degree to which he is affected. Whilst on the one hand claiming to like her the way she is, he is on the other, continuously denigrating her. An example of this is when she is typing the addresses of his friends onto envelopes, which contain invitations to his doctoral promotion (5):

Wenigstens Maschineschreiben hättest du lernen können. [S, 11].

Rolf's middle-class upbringing is poignantly obvious when he insists upon completing engineering, even though his interests have changed, pointing out that stability is eminent to good character: "Was einmal begonnen ist, muß durchgehalten werden." [S, 10]. Thus, his reaction to the protagonist's confession to having once again changed faculties: "Ich habe genug Ehrgeiz für uns beide" [S, 11], is purely hypocritical, because Rolf does not admit to having lost his respect for her for displaying 'bad' character. This, in turn, is a direct reflection of the
typewriter scene, which also reveals Rolf's hypocritical double-standards in view of what he does and does not say, depending upon the occasion and the degree to which he is affected. Moreover, it serves to expose the protagonists's growing sense of awareness, as it is not until later (note page numbers 11 and 112) that she becomes aware of this:

Als er noch keinen akademischen Titel hatte, führten wir noch Gespräche. [S, 112]

The subtle message behind the 'typewriter' statement is: if you haven't the sense to complete your studies, then you should at least have the sense to learn typing. Knowing, that for the protagonist, marriage was a solution to her dilemma of not knowing what to do with herself after dropping out of university, Rolf uses this to his advantage, making her feel obliged to succeed in at least one area of her life:

Sie erwarteten von dir, daß du ein Studium abschließen würdest, irgendeinen Weg gehen, einen Status anstreben, und du hast sie vor den Kopf gestoßen. Deine Heirat war für deine Eltern die letzte Hoffnung. [S, 31]

In the beginning, it is only the protagonist's intuition, that warns her not to marry Rolf. Upon confiding in Rolf, she is simply brushed aside "mit einer Handbewegung" [S, 10] and delivered to a speech similar to those above with regard to the virtue of stability. Although totally alien to the protagonist's perspective, Rolf's uncompromising insistence and powerful reasoning, based totally upon the upholding of appearances, disarms her completely:

Liebster Rolf, ich will nicht mehr...Da kam er mit anderen Wörtern und baute eine fensterlose Mauer. Alles war schließlich vorbereitet. Wir würden uns lächerlich machen...Du verstehst mich nicht, sagte ich. Wie willst du, daß man dich verstehen soll, wenn Du Dich selber nicht verstehst? ...Ich kann es mir beruflich und gesellschaftlich nicht leisten, auf jede deiner Launen einzugehen. Sag nein, ich werde es akzeptieren. Ja oder nein? Wenn du nein sagst, werde ich die Konsequenzen ziehen, aber du weißt: Ich pflege bei dem zu bleiben, was ich mir vornehme. [S, 10]
Ironically, Rolf adds "wer wirklich frei ist, wird sich durch äußere Formen nicht beengt fühlen" [S, 10], for this is exactly what he will not tolerate throughout their relationship.

In the opening scene, the protagonist feels betrayed as she watches her family preparing for a ceremony, the procedure of which precludes her as an individual. Preoccupied only with the facade of external appearances, the formality of the occasion has now escalated in importance and she is not even noticed in the room. The outfits they all wear suit all formal occasions, the mother having previously worn hers at grandfather's funeral, and the paradoxical analogue to the funeral is heightened through the 'sleeping beauty' image of the bride lying on the bed like a corpse in a crumpled wedding gown. When she is finally noticed, her family remarks, how she indeed resembles "einer Leiche" [S, 8].

In jest, the father asks the one question, that could rescue his daughter from the predicament she is in and, although she has indeed changed her mind, she senses that the response will echo the one given her by Rolf and therefore says nothing. Again the analogy to a corpse is made, bringing the paradox of the situation to light, in which the bride is the key figure and yet non-existent as an individual:

Die Hochzeit absagen, das wäre ja so als müßte man ein Begräbnis absagen, weil der Tote auf einmal nicht gestorben ist. Da hat man schon getrauert und jetzt soll man sich wieder freuen? [S, 24]

The protagonist would also feel the same emotions in the same order, if she did have the power to call off the wedding and the part of her that is still alive, feels betrayed by her family:

After being literally shoved into the car, scolded all the way to the church for being careless and unladylike and upon arrival at church, since the organist is already playing the wedding march, pushed down the aisle after giving a final kiss to father, mother and grandmother, the protagonist is already married to Rolf:

_Du hast Ja gesagt vor dem Priester und Nein gedacht. Du hast also gelogen. Jetzt löffe die Suppe mit dem Silberlöfél_ [S, 15].

Removed from everyone and everything around her, the protagonist's deepseated regret for having allowed herself to marry Rolf surfaces in the various sarcasms she both utters and watches pass through her mind. The metaphorical last sentence "_jetzt löffe die Suppe mit dem Silberlöfél_" [S, 15], leads directly to the banquet scene, in which the protagonist's alienation from her surroundings is again brought to light:

_Das ist deine Hochzeit, die Braut bist du, das ist kein langes, weißes Nachthemd, was du anhast, das ist ein Brautkleid. Und der, der so blaß neben dir sitzt, das ist noch immer Rolf, dein Mann ab jetzt, nicht für dich, für die anderen._ [S, 15].

The sarcastic tone transfers back to first person and describes the scene, in which she, as bride and official celebrity is given priority treatment purely because of a formality, however complicated the procedure may be:

_Le tragen zuerst mir auf, obwohl ich am weitesten von der Tür entfernt sitze, da müssen sie einen Umweg machen, linkszweidrei, bitte sehr, dann kommt Rolf dran, bitte sehr, dann meine Mutter... Die Reihenfolge ist wichtig._ [S, 15,16].

Whilst mention is made of the protagonist's mother not losing a daughter, but gaining a son, no mention is made of Rolf's mother not losing a son but gaining a daughter [S, 15]. Rolf takes no notice of his new wife but later that evening, prior to the consummation of their marriage "_nich git irgendwie solidarisch_" [S, 19] to the waiter. The protagonist, in turn, cannot stand waiters ("_Kellner habe ich nie leiden_"
können" [S, 15]) and Rolf's gesture towards a complete stranger, simply because they are of the same sex, intensifies the protagonist's feeling of alienation.

The protagonist feels as if she may as well be dead, Rolf on the other hand is very much alive, as the wedding day becomes "his day". "Er weiß nur nicht welcher." [S, 16]. Again, the analogy between the protagonist and her grandfather is made:

Die heutigen Gäste sind dieselben, die bei Großvaters Begräbnis zum letztenmal mit uns aßen. [S, 18]

Yet, when the bride becomes intoxicated and as such threatens to spoil Rolf's day by not playing her role correctly, Rolf becomes angry and threatens her in a paternalistic tone:

gib sofort das Kuvert weg...wenn du das Kuvert nicht augenblicklich weggibst, kriegst du nachher eine Ohrfeige, sagt Rolf. [S, 17]

Silence and order are again restored when the communication between husband and wife comes to a halt. The heroine's reaction to the well-wishing telegrams highlight the parody of their situation:

Jetzt müssen wir glücklich werden. Es geht gar nicht anders. [S, 18]

The protagonist does not want to consummate her marriage and postpones the inevitable. Her first strategy is to feign hunger and Rolf accompanies her to the downstairs restaurant, as it is not proper for her to go alone [S, 19]. Like the envelope scene at the wedding, the restaurant scene becomes another paradigm of traditional husband-wife relations, in which the husband adopts the role of father and educator after being given the wife's 'hand in marriage' by her previous father and educator:
Im Speisesaal streichelt Rolf meine Hand. Ich streichele die Serviette. Er nimmt mir das Feuerzeug aus der Hand, weil er mir Feuer geben muß. Du rauchst vor dem Essen? Ich mache die Zigarette aus. [S, 19]

Rolf's double standards are again disclosed, when he graciously allows his wife freedom of choice, adding a sentence not unlike the one he used in view of their marriage: "Aber rauch doch, sagt er, du bist ja frei". [S, 19] But when she does attempt to exercise her freedom, he takes away her lighter, after she has picked it up: "Warum greift er nicht nach dem Feuerzeug bevor ich es in der Hand habe." [S, 19]. Rolf nods in solidarity to the waiter [S, 19], indicating a common understanding: "zu wem hält er?" [S, 19], before leaving the restaurant with his wife. He now becomes insistent upon his rights. He leads the protagonist to their hotel room, pushes her through the doorway, locks the door after her and undresses. The protagonist realises she is trapped and resorts to escapism of the mind, first picturing the birds outside, which symbolise freedom, then herself dying of a nose-bleed, like King Attila, whilst soaking in the bath [S, 20] and subsequently her school days and the specific event which triggered off her chain of thoughts, both in imagery and in words:

König Attila! Das habe ich mir gemerkt aus dem Geschichtsunterricht, weil der Frechste aus der Klasse zum Professor sagte: Der muß ja übersall seine Nase hineinstecken! Der flog später aus dem Gymnasium...[S, 20].

Fantasy and reality merge and the protagonist, again aware of her predicament and her lack of control, wishes for a solution to her problems that transcend Rolf's control:

Vielleicht bekommt Rolf einen Herzanfall, während ich bade... Eine Bombe könnte explodieren im Hotel. Jetzt gibt es ja überall Bomben. [S, 20]
She soaks in the bath until the water becomes cold, rubs herself vigorously with the towels until her skin is red, (both of which are cleansing acts usually employed by rape victims after the rape, but in her case, before), ponders over the dressing gown given to her by her mother-in-law (which again, ironically, offers her a 'choice' between tying it either one of two ways), before venturing out of the bathroom, being untied by Rolf with one swift move and then overpowered by him with kisses with the lights fully turned on (6). The fact that she has no desire to make love does not deter Rolf. As his wife and property, her consent is taken for granted and her protests ignored:

Männer sagen einfach nein, und wenn sie nicht wollen, dann können sie nicht. Ich sage: Nein. Das Spiel beginnt...Er dreht das Licht auf...Ich drehe das Licht aus...Er dreht es auf...Und was ich alles sage in dieser Nacht, rühr mich nicht an, laß mich schlafen, ich will nicht, ich würde viel lieber spazierengehen, jetzt, ohne dich, das gilt nicht, weil Rolf das Licht immer wieder aufdreht...und seine Hand tastet weiter, ich verscheuche sie, er sagt, das hat er sich anders vorgestellt, das Bett kracht, jetzt darf ich nicht mehr nein sagen, schließlich ist er mein Mann und nicht aus Holz und ich schreie: Nein! [S, 20-21].

Ironically, it is the protagonist, who feels guilty and Rolf, who sulks, saying that he had imagined it differently. The protagonist gives in, because she has been brought up to believe it is a woman's duty to do so and Rolf takes what he has been taught is rightfully his:


Whilst Rolf violates his wife, the protagonist resorts to escapism once again, in order to cope with the situation:

Weil ich draußen bin im Schnee, bei den schwarzen Vögeln, weil ich nicht da sein werde, wenn du mich berührst. [S, 22]
The protagonist's thoughts turn to Karl, a friend from her university days, with whom she would have become involved, if he were socially acceptable [S, 115] and end with Rolf, in their happier days, when he still cared about the way she felt.

The disillusioning wedding night is followed by an equally disillusioning honeymoon in Italy, which again goes according to Rolf's meticulous plan. As it had been Rolf's wedding day, it becomes Rolf's honeymoon and, although he is ill for most of the time, nothing will deter him from his plan, just as he would not change faculties or cancel the wedding:

*Man kehrt nicht um auf einer Hochzeitsreise.* [S, 24].

Throughout their Italian tour, Rolf lectures his wife in history, geography, politics and matters of common knowledge, on each occasion denigrating her and treating her like a child. Each time, the protagonist escapes into her own world, consisting of either recollections from the past, which are in some way connected to the present or indulgences into her own fantasies, which she calls stealing "Splitterfreude aus Rolf's Tag" [S, 26] and as such, the protagonist is receiving warning signs from her subconscious self, which are gradually emerging to her conscious self.

In one such flashback, the incident upon which the book's title arises and the analogy between Rolf and the protagonist's father again becomes poignantly clear. Neither Rolf nor the father take the protagonist seriously and, like the father, Rolf is totally insensitive to his wife's interests and frame of mind, brushing them aside as trivial, superficial and not worth answering properly [S, 29]. An example of this is when Rolf denounces his wife's interest in the Italian people, culture and language [S, 26], decreeing them as inferior, but when, the protagonist suggests for them to opt out of Catholicism, Rolf instantly changes his perspective:
Als Österreicher ist man katholisch, und das trägt man wie einen Steireranzug.
[S, 27].

Patriotism then sets the tone for his subsequent denigration of the Italians as being traitors during World War II, the use of 'wir' ensuring identification and continuity with the past, both as patriot and as a man:

Wenn die Italiener nicht das Hemd gewechselt hätten, hätten wir den Krieg nicht verloren. Die deutschen Soldaten waren die tapfersten, und leider hat Adolf Hitler nicht auf seine Generäle gehört, und man muß kein Nazi sein und kein Faschist, um die Tatsachen anders zu sehen, als es einem aufgezwungen wird. Wer hat denn die russischen und die englischen und die französischen Kriegsverbrecher aufgehängt? Nein, nein, sagt er, um mit dir über die Politik zu reden, da mußt du erst reifer werden. [S, 28]

Again, the protagonist is reduced to the role of the daughter, who is too immature to discuss politics. The protagonist's emotive reaction to the past is mismatched with Rolf's objective calculation in terms of conquest and defeat and each time Rolf demands an explanation, it is purely for the purpose of downgrading her and her intelligence:

Ich kann nichts sagen, weil er alles, was ich ihm anvertraue, auspreßt. Er gibt mir die Schale zurück: Schau, so leer war deine Behauptung. Sag noch was, ich will es prüfen. Schau her, es ist wieder nichts. Da hast du es zurück. Und denk nicht immer an deine blöde Kindheit, befaß dich mit der Gegenwart, werde endlich erwachsen. [S, 29].

Thus, the protagonist's reaction to Rolf's role as patriarch and educator and to hers as the naive daughter-student is to regress even further into her childhood, as she craves for the security of her mother's womb:

Und jetzt möchte ich wieder zurück, bis in den Bauch meiner Mutter möchte ich, wenn ich uns so ansehe. [S, 29].
Rolf cannot find fault in their relationship: "Was ist denn los mit uns, fragt Rolf" [S, 29] and conveniently explains her growing depression as "eine vererbte Neigung zur Schwermut, [wo] mit man sich abzufinden [habe]" [S, 23]. In turn, Rolf's insensitivity towards the protagonist's needs and his constant belittling of her person, totally deflates her of self-worth:

Ich möchte mit jemandem sprechen können, ohne zurechtgewiesen zu werden. Mit dem Papierkorb! Mich auf die Strasse legen und mit der Strasse reden. Hör doch endlich auf zu weinen! Es tut mir gut, Rolf. Dann weine, wenn es dir guttut. Aber weine nicht endlos, sagt er, du bist schon ganz verschwollen! Ich denke, daß der menschliche Körper zu einem hohen Prozentsatz aus Wasser besteht und daß man sich vielleicht fortweinen kann, und Kleider, Schuhe, Handtasche und alles, was als Wertgegenstand bezeichnet werden muß, das bleibt auf dem Autositz zurück, und Rolf kann es einsammeln, und es gibt für ihn keine Mißverständnisse mehr. [S, 30]

Near the end of their honeymoon, Rolf, for once, does try to please his wife by taking her to a casino, cautious nevertheless because of her inquisitive interest in gambling, but again he manages to turn the event into a disaster. Leading her from table to table, like a dog: "Im Park sind Hunde ja auch an der Leine zu führen" [S, 32], Rolf takes complete control, placing every bet and calling every number, the same ones each time for security measures, despite the fact that his wife is guessing the correct numbers at random. She is angry and disappointed that Rolf again manages to spoil her night and make it into his:

Was hat einer wie Rolf hier verloren, der von einem Tisch zum anderen geht und immer auf Nummer sicher? Was er hier einsetzt, bekommt er dort wieder zurück. Ich hasse ihn. Er findet mich undankbar, und wir schleichen hinaus, man muß sich ja schämen, mit so jemandem wie Rolf unter lauter richtigen Spielern. [S, 33]

After the honeymoon, the protagonist no longer sees herself as an extension of the person, who has given her an identity, as she once did as a child in view of her father, but begins to realise, that as a person in her own right, she has been denied
her very existence. She now resents the social charade surrounding her assumed identity, knowing that it is not her, but Rolf, they respect:

Der Gemüsehändler verbeugt sich. Frau Diplomingenieur, bitte, danke, Frau Doktor, küß die Hände, auf Wiedersehen! Darf ich der Gnäfrau die Tür aufhalten? Ich bin nicht ich. Ich bin Rolf's Frau. [S, 34]

Her innate rejection of her new role as social appendix of her husband becomes evident in the following ironic self-evaluation:


Yet, the protagonist's subtle rebellion, which she demonstrates through her lack of identification with housekeeping and an obvious disinterest in the duties involved presents itself as another challenge to Rolf and he takes it upon himself to mould her:

Das mußt du doch wissen, ob jetzt Tomatenzeit ist oder nicht. Natürlich haben wir Geld, aber gerade wer Geld hat, muß wirtschaften lernen, es fällt dir kein Stein aus der Krone, wenn du dich ein bißchen dafür interessierst, geh auf den Markt, vergleich die Preise und Angebote, du sagst ja selbst, daß du dich langweilst, ruf Hilde an, sie soll dich beraten. [S, 34].

Rolf not only instructs his wife on the art of housekeeping ('wirtschaften' being the key word in view of being a 'good' housewife in all three texts, Die Klosterschule, Die Liebhaberinnen and Wie kommt das Salz ins Meer, he also dictates with whom she should socialise, what she should do with her spare time, what clothing she should and should not wear and as such, is either forbidding or
giving his permission for everything she does, to the extent of even commenting upon whether or not she may keep a diary, thus attempting to take control over even the most intimate and private realms of his wife's mind:


Whilst at times, the protagonist wants to please Rolf and allows herself to be kneaded by him to the extent of even learning to type to surprise him on his birthday [S, 41], her resentment over his invasion and control of her person gradually becomes more prominent. However, at this stage, she still regards her situation as inescapable, like living in an "ausbruchsicheres Gefängnis" [S, 20], to which she seeks a degree of justice by denying him sexual gratification:

"Er hat recht, er bringt das Geld, weiß, was die Israelis mit den Arabern falsch machen, weiß warum die Streiks in England andauern, weiß was er zu tun hat und was ich daher zu tun habe, dafür bin ich wieder frigid, Gerechtigkeit muß sein. [S, 34]."

Yet, this tactic is also ignored by Rolf and the protagonist's intense inner bitterness comes to the surface:

"Was er tut, ist Leichenschändung [S, 59]."

She cannot even relate her feelings to Rolf, as he quashes her attempts to articulate them and, preferring to evade the truth, dismisses them completely:
Mein Mann wirft Wörter aus, und sie fallen dorthin, wo er sie haben will. Meine Wörter haben kein Gewicht. So schweben sie sichtbehindernd im Raum. Ich kann sie wieder alle einfangen. [S, 58]

The training process the protagonist undergoes is similar to that of their dog, Blitz [S, 56-57], the words themselves being almost interchangeable:


Initially, the protagonist considers Blitz 'stupid' [S, 57] but upon recognising their common plight, she identifies with Blitz, who in turn becomes her surrogate child, soulmate and most loyal companion (calling him das Haustier and herself das Wohnungstier). A strong bond, based on mutual trust and understanding of each other's inner suffering, develops between them:


The balcony scene is the only scene in the entire text, which portrays solidarity amongst women. Unlike the case in Die Liebhaberinnen, in which Brigitte and Paula are completely oblivious to their common fate, the heroine in this text is aware of her unity with women in her situation and feels compassion towards them, however she has not yet progressed to the stage of transcending her isolation and
seeking the comfort and support she desperately needs from her own kind (as Frischmuth's heroines do). 'Blitz' is the only one, who is able to witness the protagonist's despair and physically comfort her, drawing attention to the bond between women and nature.

As 'Blitz' devises shortcuts to Rolf's rigorous training techniques [S. 58], the protagonist devises excuses for seeing Albert (Rolf's best friend), with whom she is having an affair. She looks upon Albert's wife, Hilde, as her rival. Not only is Hilde the perfect wife, housewife and mother, having outshone her in each of these areas, but she is also Albert's wife (7):

mit ihr schläft er ein, sie ist bei ihm, wenn er morgens den Schlaf aus den Augen reibt, sie darf ihn sehen, wenn er duscht. [S, 79].

This causes the protagonist to enjoy every moment with Albert more than she would have, had he not been been attached. She deludes herself into believing that Albert loves her more than Hilde and that he stays with Hilde only because of the children. Under the pretext of visiting Karl, who in Rolf's class-conscious eyes "kein Umgang für uns [ist]" [S, 65], or more often, under the pretext of walking 'Blitz', the protagonist meets Albert each evening at five o'clock. These evening walks and talks with Albert become the highlight of the protagonist's life, but her happiness is short-lived. Blitz gets blinded on one eye by Rolf during a hunting accident and then put down and the affair with Albert ends in an equally abrupt and callous manner, after he terminates her pregnancy to save his marriage and reputation. It is when the protagonist becomes pregnant to Albert that she realises Albert stays with Hilde because he wants to and not because of the children and that not even the child she is carrying can alter this.
Both of the protagonist's children have thus been taken away from her and in neither case, do the executioners display any compassion towards the suffering party, who is beside herself with grief. In view of Blitz' death, Rolf retorts:

Muß dich die ganze Stadt hören? So weint man nicht einmal um einen Menschen! 
Das ist doch nicht der Hund, um den du heulst, du hast doch was. [S, 84]

And in view of the abortion, Albert retorts:

Ein Ei ist kein Huhn und das Ei muß weg. [S, 106]

Albert thus ironically performs the abortion upon their unborn child for the sake of his two born children with the same hands that he used to make love to her, but which now function purely in their clinical role as doctor. The abortion scene reminds one of the protagonist's experiences with both her father and her husband, only this time it is taken one step further:


Upon seeking professional help, the protagonist is once again brushed aside as a typical manic depressive (hence a 'typical' housewife syndrome) and given
prescription drugs to dull her senses. Thus, for her, there appears to be no escape and her short, but intensely emotional outburst, illuminates her fragile state of mind:

Also, der Mann, den ich liebe, hat mein Kind umgebracht, mit einem Mann, den ich nicht ausstehen kann, bin ich verheiratet, der hat meinen Hund eingeschlafert, und ich will nicht mehr leben, weil ich mich selbst nicht mehr ausstehen kann. [S, 107].

After realising that her pleas for help are being totally disregarded, the protagonist decides to take control of her life, rather than succumb to the will of others. Thus, the turning point in her life has arrived. In that light, the very last section of the text, when juxtaposed to the very first section, shows a more assertive heroine, who will not allow her decisions to be made for her. The intermediate section serves to disclose her growing sense of awareness, which gradually shifts from a very insecure narrator's voice to one who has finally gathered the strength to sever her ties to the past and this in turn leads to the very plausible and inevitable ending: the separation and divorce. Although it is Rolf, who files for the divorce because he cannot tolerate loose ends and the protagonist, who still finds it difficult to erase her past without feeling a touch of regret, it is the protagonist, who initiates the separation against the vehement disapproval of her parents and in spite of Rolf's 'gracious' forgiveness and who publically takes the blame for everything during the court hearing.

The courtroom scene poignantly exposes the sexist attitudes of today's so-called egalitarian society, in which, as a result of the different norms applied to the different sexes, the protagonist stands as the culprit and both men remain exempt from blame. As Albert had behaved with a callous indifference towards the protagonist both during and after the abortion, so does the judge, in his official role as surrogate father and executor of paternal law and order. As the 'guilty party', the protagonist is exposed in court as an exemplary case of a negative role model of
the wife and publically condemned. Yet, this time, it is not she, who feels unsettled, but the Judge:


The biblical connotations to Maria Magdalena are self-evident as is the absence of a saviour. Hence, the protagonist comes to her own rescue by turning the incident into a farce, which is not at all well-received in the courtroom:


Not only is there tacit solidarity between Rolf and the Judge, but also extreme prejudice in their attitude towards the role of the wife. Sex with one's wife, even if it is against her will, is sanctioned as long as it remains 'respectable'. Rolf is granted the divorce and the protagonist is publically discredited, both within and outside the courtroom. Whilst Rolf has everyone's support, the protagonist has no one's, not even that of her own family, who are ashamed of her and sympathise with Rolf. Thus, the severing of ties goes both ways and the protagonist realises,
that she must soon undertake that initial step towards absolute independence. [S, 120]

In that light, it is not the protagonist who regresses, but Rolf, for he has learnt nothing from this marriage and will probably act in the very same way towards his next wife. Unlike the protagonist, who moves in with her parents only 'zu Besuch' and views her old room as merely 'geliehen' [S, 12], because she indeed has nowhere else to go [S, 111]), Rolf has his mother move in with him straight after the divorce as his replacement housekeeper, even though he is both old enough and financially in the position to take care of himself.

The fact that Rolf has to repay the protagonist's parents the money they had wrongly invested in their daughter's future [S, 111], indeed reinforces Millett's view, that marriage is a financial alliance, as the protagonist's marriage is also essentially a financial transaction between her parents and Rolf. Yet, the protagonist defies them all by transcending their value system. In contrast to Rolf, she has not only learnt from her marriage and, as a consequence, is unlikely to fall into the same trap again, but she can also deal with its dissolution much better than either Rolf or her family, neither of whom know how to address or behave towards the other after the divorce. The protagonist, however, harbours no hard feelings towards her ex-husband, despite her experiences with him, but remembers him in his better days, before he became the Rolf to whom she could not relate. Schwaiger thus concludes the novel with an element of hope with regard to male-female relationships, which precludes marriage. The protagonist learns from her experience that the institution of marriage is detrimental to women. Indeed, the protagonist has advanced further than her husband in every respect and shows every indication of being on the road towards emancipation.
In thirty-two chronologically ordered segments, Jelinek traces the lives of two women from the awakening of the need for independence through marriage and its consequences. Her narrative style consists of simple sentences containing stereotypical language and imagery, which are constantly repeated in her depiction of the parallel lives of Brigitte and Paula, drawing attention to the fact that it is not the individual fate of these two women that is being related, but the fate of those they represent. Although the protagonists attempt to take control of their destiny, not one transforms into a dynamic agent of change, but both remain static, representing the non-heroic average. Jelinek exposes the fallacy of existing notions concerning women's roles in courtship and in marriage and depicts marriage "as a purely financial alliance, that serves as a citadel of property and traditional interests" (1). The protagonists, victims of patriarchal-capitalist ideology and as such, victims of both their sex and their class and their struggle to attain their goal of marriage and security are paradigmatic of how the anonymous exploitation of women in the workforce is simply transferred to personal exploitation in the domestic sphere. The paradoxical analogue is the bra factory, in which the two protagonists are employed (although at different times) located in an idyllic setting of an Austrian mountain district, manufacturing garments to confine the female body. Its female workers are also doubly exploited - as employees and as wearers of such undergarments. It is an exemplary case of nature versus culture, with the former in each case being violated by the latter within the economic matrix of a provincial industrial region.

Jelinek's blatant exposure of the destructive forces of trivial myths and media propaganda, against whose influences Brigitte and Paula are defenseless, is to
arouse awareness and the 'unbearable reality' of the narrative is didactically effective (2).

Both content and language echo the biblical tone emulated in Frischmuth's Klosterschule; Jelinek, of course, employing a much more caustic choice of words:

..und werde hausfrau und hilf mir bei der hausarbeit und im stall und bediene deinen vatter so wie ich ihn bediene und bediene auch deinen bruder, wenn er aus dem holz kommt. [L, 16]

Limited in education and in options to a greater extent than the protagonist of Wie kommt das Salz ins Meer and the predominantly middle-class Klosterschule girls, Brigitte and Paula's only hope of escaping anonymity is via marriage [L, 9; 26]. In parodying the consciousness industry, Jelinek probes the media origins of self-destructive, self-deceptive ideologies concerning love and marriage and unmask its role in preventing change and creating instead impotent victims of the media establishment's control, who in turn become catalysts for disaster.

The focal point of Brigitte's and Paula's expectations differ. Brigitte is materialistic and envisages married life in view of possessions:

brigitte muß schauen, daß sie einen mann bekommt, der nicht ins wirtshaus geht. sie muß schauen, daß sie eine schöne Wohnung bekommt. sie muß schauen, daß sie kinder bekommt. sie muß schauen, daß sie schöne möbel bekommt. dann muß sie schauen, daß sie nicht mehr arbeiten gehen muß. dann muß sie vorher noch schauen, daß das auto ausbezahlt ist. dann muß sie schauen, daß sie sich jedes Jahr einen schönen urlaub leisten können. dann muß sie allerdings schauen, daß sie nicht durch die finger schauen muß. [L, 20]

Paula is idealistic and believes married life to be based on a love, which identifies "die liebe mit sinnlichkeit ": [L, 33]:

paula träumt wie alle frauen von der liebe...paula hat, trotz aller liebe zur schneiderei, gelernt, daß die arbeit etwas lästiges ist, das die liebe nur abhält, nicht sie herbringt. [L, 24-25]
Victims of ideologies that place their destiny beyond their control, it is left, most ironically, in the hands of Heinz and Erich, who are barely superior to Brigitte and Paula socially and inferior to them intellectually. Yet, Brigitte, who regards everything in monetary terms, is determined to become Heinz’ wife in spite of his shortcomings:

brigitte weiß aber auch daß es für sie keinen aufstieg gibt, es gibt nur heinz oder etwas schlechteres als heinz... etwas, das besser ist als heinz, ist für brigitte absolut unerreichtbar, etwas, was schlechter ist als heinz, will brigitte nicht haben. brigitte wehrt sich mit händen und füßen gegen den abstieg, der abstieg, das ist der verlust von heinz. [L, 9-10]

Paula, who is brainwashed by trivial romance novels, is waiting to be chosen by the right man:

paula wartet darauf, daß sie ausgewählt wird, worauf es ankommt. es kommt darauf an, vom richtigen ausgewählt zu werden [L, 24],

Ironically, it is she, who does the choosing and not Erich, whom she regards as the chosen one:

paula hat einmal über bestimmte männer gelesen, die in einer gewohnten umgebung wie die panther in einem dschungel gewirkt haben. fremdartig, gefährlich und angenehm fürs auge und herz....wenn aber einer das könnte, dann erich, der panther. gleich sucht paula in der wochenzeitschrift die stelle mit dem panther, da ist sie ja! [L, 33]

They believe that not only a destiny but also an identity will be given to them in marriage, Brigitte’s rationale being as follows:

heinz ist etwas, brigitte ist nichts, was nicht andre ohne mühe genauso sein könnten. heinz ist unverwechselbar, und man hat heinz auch oftmals nötig...brigitte ist austauschbar und unnötig.... heinz soll die geschichte von brigitte werden, er soll ihr ein eigenes leben machen. [L, 10-11]

On the other hand, Paula’s view is clouded by the myth of romantic love:

die zukunft, die ist immer der andre, die kommt immer vom andren daß paula die liebe mit sinnlichkeit verbindet, ist eine folge der zeitschriften, die sie gerne liest...paula hat niemals gelernt, selber auszuwählen und zu bestimmen. es genügt [aber] nicht, sich einfach himlos der liebe hinzugeben, wenn sie anklopf, man muß auch rechnen wegen dem spätern leben [L, 24]
Since marriage is an investment for the future, Brigitte and Paula invest all they have - their youth and their bodies. They discover that getting a man to marry them is an arduous task, both energy- and time-consuming. Moreover, it comes at the expense of total self-degradation and servitude:

heute zum beispiel kniet brigitte vor der klomuschel im schrebergartenhaus vom heinz und dessen eltern auf dem kalten fuBboden... vor fünf minutes hat sie ja gesagt, sie macht das gern... ihr wird ganz schlecht vor all der scheiße, die sich im laufe der woche so in einem drei-personenhaushalt ansammelt. [L, 12]

Both girls are rejected by their future in-laws, but neither gives up, no matter how degrading the pursuit:

oben wird dann paula wie ein bumerang abgefangen, noch ehe sie sich richtig vom schwung des laufens erholt hat, umgedreht, ein tritt in den arsch, und heim zu eilt das mädchen. [L, 60]

Reduced to bodies, they must trap Heinz and Erich before becoming 'spoilt goods': "gebrauchte frauen werden selten und wenn, dann vom erstverbraucher genommen" [L, 15], in which case they would risk being (and in their eyes quite justifiably so) abandoned and replaced, like any disposable item in a consumer society:

brigitte hat einen korper zu bieten. auBer brigittes korper werden zur gleichen zeit noch viele andre korper auf den markt geworfen.... sie muß heinz ständig klar machen, daß es ohne sie keine zukunft für ihn gibt, das ist eine schwere anstrengung. außerdem muß nachdrücklich verhindert werden, daß heinz vielleicht seine zukunft in jemand anderem sehen könnte. [L, 10-12]

Therefore, they must weigh their odds carefully, so as not to waste their time, energy and reputation on fruitless ventures. Again, Brigitte thinks in material terms:

zu hause hilft brigitte nichts, das heiße kapital und arbeitskraft in ein von vornherein zum scheitern verurteites mit verlust arbeitendes kleinuntnehmen zu stecken. aussichtslos. hoffnungslos. brigitte investiert besser dort, wo etwas herauskommen kann. ein ganz neues leben. [L, 12]
And Paula in terms of her idealistic search for personal worth, whereby a wrong investment would inevitably lower "ihren marktwert gleich ins bodenlose" [L, 25] and yet frequent rejection could jeopardize her entire future: "man sollte aber nicht zu oft nein sagen, weil man sonst einmal zuviel nein gesagt hat, und das glück in zukunft vorbeigeht und nicht mehr anlingelt". [L, 26]

Apart from impressing Heinz and Erich with a display of their culinary and other domestic talents, the lovers' most effective weapon is their ability to reproduce and with either the intent of (as in Brigitte's case) or the evidence of having (as in Paula's case) immortalised their partner, they succeed in cornering Heinz and Erich into marriage. Jelinek ironises the instrumental nature of their seduction, using slapstick images, sardonic humour and familiar clichés to heighten the effect:

brigitte will es in sich hineinkriegen und, da es dann auch drinnenbleibt und nicht wieder ungenützt, sinnlos und zukunftslos herausrinnt. brigitte will, daß heinz abdrückt und ihr den extrakt aus dem rindsbraten und den semmelknödeln von heute mittag hineinschießt. jetzt muß dieser schlatzige mist doch endlich hineingespritzt und drinnen sein, aber nein, gut ding braucht weile, und heinz braucht auch weile. [L, 378]

And in Paula's case:

paula ist auf die liebe aus wie ein schwein auf die eicheln. paula schnobert in allen ritzen nach erich, um ihm ihren körper zum geschenk zu machen. [L, 70]

Yet, neither woman is in control of her body. Paula's immediate and barely memorable pregnancy is purely accidental, whilst Brigitte's repeated failure to become pregnant makes the thought of sex with Heinz increasingly unbearable. For Jelinek, sex is a manifestation of power and power lies with men, enabling them to take control:
brigitte fühlt den schwammigen heinzbauch auf sich herunter drücken...brigitte denkt, während wieder langsam leben und bewegung in heinz kommt, an ihre zukunft. die zukunft soll von der ekelregerenden gegenwart ablenken. brigitte will, daß heinz schneller machen soll, weil die zukunft vielleicht nicht mehr lange warten kann. das vorspiel soll endlich aus sein, damit die hauptsache, der stammhalter, anfangen kann. [L, 38]

Jelinek satirises the issue of women being reduced to bodies and as such to instruments of male power:

paula erlebt alles in der leideform, nicht in der tägtigkeitsform...frühzeitig lernt paula, ihren körper und das, was mit ihm geschieht, als etwas zu betrachten, das einem andren passiert als ihr selbst. einem nebenkörper gewissermassen, einer nebenpaula. [L, 25]

Furthermore, she demystifies the concept of motherhood as a positive, warm instinct inherent in all women, by allowing a contradictory instinct to surface in Paula, whose unsympathetic 'support network' initiates her attempt to abort [L, 76], and also in Brigitte:

in wirklichkeit ekelt sich brigitte vor sauglingen. in wirklichkeit würde sie ihnen am liebsten die zarten fingerknöchelchen brechen, die hilflosen kleinen zehen mit bambussplittern spicken und der frischangekommenen hauptperson einen dreckigen fetzen statt des geliebten nuckelschnullers ins maul stecken. [L, 28]

In contrast to Schwaiger's text, which begins with the wedding ceremony, in Jelinek's text, the wedding ceremony is near the end. Both protagonists want to get married and view their eventual marriage to Erich and Heinz as a triumph on their part. Paula already has one child with the groom and Brigitte is pregnant to Heinz but as both women respect the formalities eminent in such an occasion, Brigitte hides her pregnancy and Paula hides her baby. As both women are naive victims of the pervasive ideology, in which marriage is propagated as a woman's ultimate goal, it is the narrator, who provides the sardonic analogy
between marriage and death. Already at the beginning of the narration, the reader is prepared for what is to come:

am ende ihrer jugend holen sich die jungmänner eine tüchtige, sparsame frau ins haus. ende der jugend. anfang des alters...für die frau ende des lebens und anfang des des kinderkriegens...der todeskampf [dauert] oft jahre und jahre, oft auch noch so lange, daß sie dem todeskampf ihrer töchter beiwohnen können. [L, 4].

Then, in view of Paula's and Brigitte's marriages, the interrelationship between birth, death and marriage plays a key role, as the promise of new life stirring within Brigitte results in Heinz finally agreeing to marry her and the death of Erich's father results in Erich's change of heart towards Paula. Heinz marries Brigitte out of duty, Erich marries Paula because his mother tells him it is his duty. As such, the reverse situation to Wie kommt das Salz ins Meer occurs in this text, with both brides being desperate to marry and both grooms being outwitted into marrying them. The wedding ceremony is depicted over three pages of repetitious clichés and sentences, which destroy the idyllic imagery surrounding weddings and transform it into a mundane event. Although the two protagonists don't even know one another, the duplicate ceremonies make it appear like a double wedding:

heut ist endlich der ersehnte tag gekommen. strahlenblaues wetter begrüßt den langersehnten tag.
heut ist endlich der ersehnte tag gekommen. strahlenblaues wetter begrüßt den langersehnten tag.
brigitte hat ein bodenlanges weißes kleid an, das die schneiderin eigens für sie genäht hat.
paula hat ein bodenlanges weißes kleid an, das die schneiderin, ihre frühere lehrerin, eigens für sie genäht hat.
brigitte hat ein bukett aus weißen rosen im arm. paula hat ein bukett aus weißen rosen im arm. [L, 106].

Both women are 'dankbar' and 'glücklich' to be married and will gladly subordinate themselves to their husbands:
brigitte denkt, daß sie schon manchmal aufmucken wird, im großen und ganzen hat heinz aber recht, und sie wird tun, was er sagt.
paula denkt, daß sie von jetzt nur mehr machen wird, was erich ihr sagt. [L, 106].

The grooms are either making jokes (Heinz) or having jokes made (Erich) about their lost freedom [L, 106], when indeed this is a farce and the reality of the situation is quite the contrary:

heinz weiß, daß er bescheid weiß, heinz weiß, daß seine frau nicht bescheid weiß. heinz hat macht über seine unwissende frau.
erich weiß nicht bescheid. er hat trotzdem unbeschränkte macht über seine frau, was er ausnützen wird [L, 108].

Like the heroine of Wie kommt das Salz ins Meer, Brigitte and Paula will also not be allowed to mature and develop as individuals in their own right and the narrator, knowing the outcome, instructs the reader of their fate, making Paula and Brigitte standard examples of what really happens to women in marriage.

Although Brigitte, for whom love had nothing to do with it, marries her way out of her predicament whilst Paula, for whom love had everything to do with it, marries her way into hers, the fate of both lovers is determined by a culture, which condemns women to perpetual dependency. No matter how hard Paula thinks: "ist es einer mit zukunft oder ohne zukunft?" [L, 25], she chooses wrongly and the cycle of abuse, to which she had been subjected by her parents continues in her marriage. Ironically, Paula ends up with exactly the fate she was desperate to avoid:

hier das ergebnis: verheiratet, zwei kinder. es folgt das wegstoßen, schimpfen, kreischen und manchmal folgt das taumeln und umfallen des alkoholikers und verführers. manchmal folgt das umfallen, ruhegeben und rauschausschlafen. manchmal wird der genannte auch brutal und grob. [L, 25]

And the consequences are equally tragic:
aus dem hoffnungsvollen lehrmädchen der schneiderei im ersten lehrjahr ist eine zerbrochene frau mit ungenügenden schneiderei kenntnissen geworden. das ist zu wenig. [L, 120]

Brigitte not only continues her role of unpaid domestic servant, she is also an unpaid salesperson in her husband's business and an unpaid childrearer for the children she never wanted. Although Brigitte's hard labour is rewarded with a comfortable existence, she is in every sense Heinz' subordinate: "heinz hat macht über seine unwissende frau" [L, 108]. In turn, she takes her frustrations out on her subordinates, her children [L, 111] and consequently, despite her enjoyment of the material comforts in life, hatred is eating her up inside [L, 111].

The fact that Jelinek calls Brigitte 'das gute Beispiel' and Paula 'das schlechte Beispiel' is indeed ironic, as both women are exploited at home and at work, both prostitute themselves for material gains (in Paula's case, it is with strangers, to make ends meet and in Brigitte's, it is with her husband, to secure her wealth), neither is in control of her destiny and both have fallen victims to ideologies, which are purely instrumental and which have crippled their perspective and destroyed their sense of selfhood. In fact, both women symbolise little more than the other "zerquetschte[n] Eintagsfliegen". [L, 54]

In this text, Jelinek makes it quite clear, that birth determines her characters' future and that the means of their struggle is determined by a world view, in which they, as women, are defined according to the man they bed. Working-class women resent middle-class women because of their privileged lifestyle and fail to recognise their common denominator - oppression as a group because of their sex. Brigitte hates Susi with a vengeance, because Susi epitomises the ideal woman as portrayed in the media, who promises to become the perfect middle-class housewife, invariably threatening her chances with Heinz:
Susi, on the other hand, is quite indifferent about Brigitte and does not reciprocate her animosity. She feels neither threatened by her nor does she intend to marry Heinz, whom she considers beneath her social, intellectual and financial levels. She visits Heinz and his family simply because she enjoys the attention and her position of power:

As marketing products, middle-class women, like Susi, present a much better purchase than do working-class women, like Paula and Brigitte and as a result, their aspirations are higher. In view of levels of awareness, although middle-class women have access to a higher level of education and should, at least in theory, employ a heightened sense of awareness, in practice this is not so and their fate does not differ in essence from that of working-class women, although the context, in which it exists, does. Indeed, Susi gives up her studies in 'Germanistik' to marry her 'freshly-baked' (new-age sensitive male) fiancé [L, 117]. In contrast to the traditional Heinz, who wouldn't know what to do with a modern woman [L, 116], is happy to have found a woman, who as wife and mother, is "geistig auf zack" [L, 116], but prefers to stay at home.

The fact that Susi falls into the same, but slightly more 'privileged' trap as Brigitte, trading her career and her ideals for marriage and children [L, 63; 115], shows Jelinek's scepticism with regard to the bourgeois feminists' tactics of compromise and belief in the 'golden middle', instead of working towards initiating change. Susi's 'golden hair' [L, 51] and middle-of-the-road approach
to life \([L, 51]\) are both analogies to the position of women, who in theory, aspire to feminist goals \([L, 116]\), but in practice, yield to tradition:

Susi ist modern und altmodisch in einem, eine Mischung, die ihr frischgebackener Verlobter besonders liebt. Überhaupt: das beste ist immer ein vernünftiger Mittelweg, meint Susi viel ernster, als es zu ihrem hübschen Köpfchen passen würde. Und ihr zukünftiger Gatte stimmt ihr lachend bei. \([L, 117]\)

To a degree Susi's fate is followed up in that of the protagonist of Jelinek's play \emph{Was geschah nachdem Nora ihren Mann verlassen hatte?}. Nora's fate serves as an example of Jelinek's scepticism with regard to women's emancipation within a patriarchal-capitalist context, then as today. The impenetrability of the social barriers created by the pervasive social hierarchy results in the obstruction to self-realisation. Although Nora has every intention of creating her own identity, she is confronted by restrictions externally imposed upon her by both sexes, which alienate her from her surroundings and force her to resort to her traditional role as woman, to which she has been conditioned. Thus, harbouring the aspirations of a woman, whose privileged life has sheltered her from the harsh reality of life in the workforce, Nora is surprised to learn that her co-workers do not view their financial independence as liberating, but restricting and would gladly exchange their paid labour for unpaid labour in the home. In their view, marriage and financial dependence is preferable to factory work and financial independance. Like Brigitte and Paula, they see no other options and similarly, are not in the position to even speculate self-realisation. Jelinek highlights the lack of solidarity amongst women as portrayed in the relationships between Brigitte and Paula, who despite their common sex, fate and background, demonstrate little compassion towards their own kind and between Brigitte and Susi, who, as representatives of different subordinate
groups, feel alienated from one another in spite of their shared experience of oppression as women:

zweischen susi und brigitte steht eine unverrückbare demarkationslinie, die volle kaffee-kanne, es ist ein scharfer, schmerzhafter trennungstrich, der beide an ihren platz verweist, der die beiden unvereinbaren charaktere trennt. wenn jedoch eine die kanne aufhebt und kaffee eingießt, dann sind plötzlich susi und brigitte gemeinsam und nicht getrennt. [L, 63]

Brigitte is engaged in an on-going rivalry with Susi throughout the text and this in turn causes her to to attack Susi, fearing to be outshone by her once again:

launig hört er (Heinz) auf das schimpfen und brüllen brigittes, die susi an den haaren vom küchenherd zurückhalten möchte...auch die mutter horcht mit einem lachenden und einem weinenden auge auf das treiben in der küche. der vati sagt, daß diese mädchen doch immer so schnattern müssen, wie hühner. [L, 65]

All of the above characters (Nora, Susi, Brigitte and Paula) act in accordance with a value-system imposed upon them, which serves to maintain the distribution of power between the sexes, which they have internalised and accepted as the norm. Moreover, as it is in Nora's case, with no support network or avenue for self-realisation, Nora renounces her ideals and resorts to her body to secure a future for herself. The satirical juxtaposition to a woman's reduction to her body is Nora's performance before Weygang, in which she performs cartwheels and other contortionistic feats. Yet, in spite of the impression she makes, Nora's future with Weygang is short-lived. After being exploited and disowned, Nora has no other option but to return to the husband she has helped destroy.
4.3.3. WOMEN AS OBJECTS: ELFRIEDE JELINEK'S LUST

In this text, patriarchal-capitalist ideology is again juxtaposed to the physical and emotional oppression of the heroine and a similar, but much more extreme case of physical and emotional abuse against women as in Die Liebhaberinnen is portrayed. Through the eyes of an omniscient narrator, Jelinek relates the fate of a wife of a country-town factory magnate, who in her position as wife of a wealthy businessman, does not experience victimage within the paid labour force, but in her personal life, particularly in the 'sanctuary' of her home. As in Die Liebhaberinnen, the setting is one of an idyllic mountain region and the analogy between women and nature, both of which are abused in the name of progress (history, culture, technology, industrialisation) is poignantly politicised in the homelife of the two central characters. With blasphemous metaphorical analogues to Hermann's god-like omnipotence (as he is equipped with power, money and a voracious sex drive), the pornographic myth of masculine superiority is effectively encapsulated and the male principle's desire to dominate and destroy, own and control is reflected in metaphores, which refer to Hermann's and Gerti's body parts. Thus, at times, Hermann's violation of Gerti is juxtaposed to man's violation of nature:

Er greift in ihrem Gebüsch herum, damit er endlich einsteigen kann...Ihr Laub, ihre Zweige biegt er auseinander. [LU, 24]

Whilst in others, to man's attitude to industrialised technology:

Ihr Mann hat sie durch Tritte schon zweimal anspringen lassen. Dann schien seine Batterie endlich leer zu sein [LU, 70].

Or to woman's non-existence in patriarchal history:

Reducing the characters to their organs serves not only to reinforce the power relationships between the sexes, between man and nature and between man and industrialisation, but also to highlight the dehumanisation of individuals in the capitalist superstructure. Approximately one quarter of the two hundred and fifty page narration (1) delivers a sexually explicit and detailed exposition of the obscenities committed against the heroine, who falls victim to the most degrading and perverted forms of sexual practices, in a language that is vulgar, crude and impersonal, to effectively shock the reader into recognition of the underlying gravity of the master-slave relationship within the capitalist power structure. This effect, in turn, is enhanced by the deconstruction of media images, of literary (Hölderlin, in particular) and biblical quotations, of pervasive myths and ideologies and the author's usual sardonic narrative style, which indeed provide the intended result - namely that of effectively separating history from nature and destroying the concept that the power relations between the sexes are the result of a natural process of evolution:

Sie sollen den Dingen, der Sexualität, ihre Geschichte wiedergeben, sie nicht in ihrer scheinbaren Unschuld lassen, sondern die Schuldigen benennen. Die nennen, die sich Sexualität aneignen und das Herr/Knecht Verhältnis zwischen Männern und Frauen produzieren. (2)

Again, it is by no means the fate of an individual, that is being related, but of one who represents her class and status. In placing her heroine in the privileged upper-middle class and, as such, in a class one would image to be beyond exploitation, Jelinek shows that for women marriage is a form of oppression, to
which no woman is exempt. Although, in theory, Gerti belongs to the (minority) class of the oppressors, in practice her status lies with the majority, the oppressed, represented by the 'Werkschor', her husband's employees. Her husband, Hermann, in turn, remains the oppressor in class and status, because he is powerful and he is the man, who owns and controls everything and everyone in the district:

Sie (Gerti) gilt allein schon mehr als die Hälfte von allen Körpem hier, die andre Hälfte arbeitet in der Papierfabrik unter dem Mann, nachdem die Sirene aufgejault hat... Der Direktor hält die Frau mit seinem Gewicht nieder. Um die freudig von der Mühe zur Ruh wechselnden Arbeiter niederzuhalten, genügt seine Unterschrift. [LU, 7]

Indeed, every reference to Gerti infers her absolute powerlessness and object-like status and, in each case, clearly shows, that she is forced into submission by her husband, who considers it to be his incontestable right. Gerti is likened to a piggy bank [LU, 31], to a domestic pet [LU, 33], to a toy [LU, 36], to a piece of property [LU, 37], to a toilet [LU, 38], even to a rope [LU, 38] in a manner that makes the reader aware, that this is exactly how Hermann sees Gerti on each of these occasions. The narrator's dry and caustic evaluation of women's position within the patriarchal-capitalist hierarchy is Jelinek's way of appealing to her readers to at least recognise, if not do something about, the reality of women's situation:

Auf diese Weise, daß man ihr ein schönes Haus gebaut hat, wird man die Partnerin nicht verlieren,...Nur von den Frauen können wir’s uns in winziger Münze zurückholen. Wohin sollten sie sonst gehen, die Frauen, als zu denen, die im Starken herumplätschen und frohlocken mit den Abfällen, die ihnen wie Schaum vom Gebiß fallen. [LU, 39]

Thus, as in Die Liebhaberinnen, Jelinek equates sex in marriage with prostitution [LU, 31] and portrays marriage itself as a purely financial alliance. Although Hermann, as owner and controller of the entire district, could seek
sexual gratification elsewhere, he resorts to his wife alone, for fear of contracting Aids:

Der Direktor liest die Anzeigen und bestellt seiner Frau im Fachhandel ein Fach, in das sie sich legen kann, aus roter Perlonspitze mit Löchern in der Stille, durch die die Steine scheinen. Dem Mann genügt eine alleine nicht, doch die drohende Krankheit hemmt ihn, seinen Stachel auszufahren und Honig zu saugen [LU, 14]

Indeed, this is a contradiction in terms and exposes the false illusion, that men control nature. Hermann's fear of contracting Aids, the 'mysterious' virus, which represents nature's punishment for sexual promiscuousness, contradicts the patriarchal perspective of women being the embodiment of mystery, of sexual promiscuity and of evil, who must be punished. Because it is Hermann, who is unable to control his sexual urges, which no doubt, are triggered off by his young, female employees, he in turn seeks refuge in an institution, that he has created and which he regards as 'disease-free'. Thus, he visits Gerti several times a day, insisting upon instant submission and probes her, enters her, urinates and defecates on her, forcing her to do the most repulsive things to him [LU, 41; 76], all of which are sanctioned by the patriarchal institution of marriage. Jelinek makes frequent references to the Christian concept of wives being the property of their husbands, who must comply with their husband's needs, echoing Schwaiger's Wie kommt das Salz ins Meer and Frischmuth's Die Klosterschule, but taking it to the extreme [LU, 14, 125, 126]:

Der Direktor bedarf seiner eigenen Frau, denn: jedem die seine, nicht wahr... So wurde ihnen von der christl. Gesellschaft, welche sie einst verheiratete, dieses Vergnügen zugebilligt. Der Vater darf die Mutter endlos verkosten, unter die Löcher ihrer Oberbekleidung greifen, bis sie längst keine Angst um ihre Geheimnisse mehr kennt. [LU, 162; 127]
Whilst habitually and oftentimes repeatedly raping his wife in a violent sexual frenzy, Jelinek describes in detail the manner, in which Hermann violates Gerti, in order to alert the reader to the potential injustice, to which women are exposed within the glorified sanctity of marriage:

Der Direktor spricht ruhig von der Fut und wie er sie gleich auseinanderreißen wird....Er hält die Frau mit der linken Hand and der Hüfte fest und zieht ihr, wenn überhaupt, die zweckdienliche Kleidung über den Kopf. Sie zappelt vor seinem Schwergewicht...Neben der Frau fallen Kleidungshaufen zusammen wie tote Tiere...Der schwere Schädel des Direktors wühlt sich beißend in ihr Schamhaar, allzeit bereit ist sein Verlangen, etwas von ihr zu verlangen. Er neigt sein Haupt ins Freie und drückt stattdessen das ihrige an seinen Flaschenhals, wo es ihr schmecken soll. Er spaltet ihr den Schädel über seinen Schwanzz, verschwindet in ihr und zwickt sie als Hilfslieferung noch fest in den Hintern. Er drückt ihre Stirn nach hinten, daß ihr Genick ungeschickt knackt, und schlürft an ihren Schamlippen, alles zusammengenommen und gebündelt, damit still aus seinen Augen das Leben auf sie schauen kann. [LU, 16-17]

She also allows for Gerti's reactions to surface, which cringe, whenever her husband's presence is detected. She is repulsed by him, loathes having sex with him [LU, 230] and takes to the bottle as a means of escape. But a woman's voice is not heard and patriarchal power remains unshaken. Thus, when Gerti seeks salvation in a young lover, she again experiences sheer degradation, when gang-raped by her lover's friends, upon her lover's instigation, then repossessed by her husband and raped repeatedly, first in front of her lover and then at home. The pattern of male-female relations remains unchanged and will be repeated by her son, when he comes of age. Taking matters into her own hands, Gerti asphyxiates her drugged son, drags him to a nearby lake and throws him in, to put an end to the cycle of abuse, in which she is trapped:

Wie wird dieses Kind erst aufgeizen, wenn es, nach Papas Vorbild im Reisepaß, ein Mann und Vater geworden ist! ...sein Kind wird nach ihm weiterleben und andere Menschen in seiner Stadt weiter sekkieren. [LU, 38, 151]
Jelinek's original intention for writing *Lust* was to produce a piece of pornographic work complementary to Bataille's *L'Histoire de L'Oeil*, but after coming to the conclusion that the existing language does not offer her the means of expressing herself as a woman writing pornographic material (3), she instead allows it to expose the power conflict between the sexes [LU, 28]. The influence of "intellectual pornographers" (4), such as Bataille and de Sade is nevertheless present, not so much in the plot, but in the adaptation of certain concepts, such as that of 'transgressing the boundary' between life and death through eroticism, whereby violence is a common ingredient and murder is the ultimate form of erotic violation (5) [LU, 24; 29]. But in Jelinek's text, this masculine pretext of transcending one's boundaries is parodied and death and sex are separated, as there are no sexual connotations to the infanticide (6), which, in turn, provides an important contrast to Bataille. Moreover, unlike Bataille's version, the woman in Jelinek's story is not a willing partner and, in her depiction and commentary, Jelinek demystifies the concept that women enjoy aggressive sex:

Er greift ihr unter den Rock, er prasselt durch die Wände ihrer Unterwäsche. Er will sich (die Familie ist unter sich, einer unter dem anderen) in seine Frau hineinzwängen, damit er seine Grenzen spürt...Sie klammert sich an der Schlafzimmertür fest, doch die Grenzen sind im Bad, eine Tür weiter, und heute schon einmal überschritten worden... Es ist unglaublich, was man mit den dehnbaren Schamlippen alles anfangen kann, um sie, als wär's ihr Schicksal, in der Form zu verzerren. Man kann sie z.B. zusammendrehen wie ein spitze Tüte...Das tut doch weh, denkt keiner daran? Und jetzt ein bisserl lachen und zwicken und ausklopfen, so ist's recht. [LU, 24, 29. 197]

In parodying male discourse and the male perspective of sado-masochism, Jelinek effectively reverses the impact of generating desire in her readers and replaces it with feelings of repulsion. From that point of view, *Lust* can be classified as anti-pornographic (6). Moreover, by having the narrator directly address its readers at regular intervals throughout the text, Jelinek ensures that

146
the distance between the protagonist and the reader is maintained. Rhetorical questions, such as: "Haben sie noch Lust zu lesen und zu leben? Nein? Na also!" [LU, 170], after a particularly grotesque exposition, effectively distances the reader from the event and heightens his or her awareness to the fact that the text is meant to be didactic and, as such, intended to evoke analytical reflection.

Indeed, this text takes the dominance-subordination aspect of the husband-wife relationship much further than in both Wie kommt das Salz ins Meer and in Die Liebhaberinnen and unlike the victims of the above texts, the victim in this text undertakes a drastic measure to remedy the situation. Like Paula in Die Liebhaberinnen, Gerti too experiences life in leideform, but unlike Paula, she progresses to tätigkeitsform, although, not unexpectedly, with an equally tragic outcome. The traditional image of women as wives, housewives and mothers is nevertheless credibly destroyed and insight is given into the situation, that creates its destroyer at the bottom end, but by no means can Gerti's retaliation be understood as a resolution, for she does not transform into a dynamic agent of change on behalf of those she represents and, indeed, the apocalyptic finale mirrors Jelinek's scepticism with regard to women fighting against oppression on their own (7).

4.4.1. ALTERNATIVE PARTNERSHIPS: THE SINGLE PARENT AND THE SINGLE WOMAN

The heroines in Frischmuth's Kai und die Liebe zu den Modellen, Die Ferienfamilie and Bindungen and Schwaiger's Schönes Licht offer a variety of alternative choices outside of marriage that have both positive and negative consequences. Each text contains a didactic message to heighten the reader's awareness to the issues each author wishes to raise. The protagonists have at least one relationship during the course of the narration and are financially independent.
women, who enjoy their profession but have difficulties in integrating it into their private lives.

4.4.2. THE SINGLE PARENT

The two most positive alternative images of single mothers are Amy in *Kai und die Liebe zu den Modellen* and Nora in *Die Ferienfamilie*. Both women are assertive, independent, intelligent and open to change. Nora can be understood as an extension of Amy, in that *Die Ferienfamilie* starts where *Kai und die Liebe zu den Modellen* finished. In *Kai und die Liebe zu den Modellen* Amy decides not to continue her relationship with Klemens, the father of her five year old son Kai because he is not open to alternative life patterns ('Lebensmuster') and she does not want to give up her identity for one that will merely be an extension of his and in *Die Ferienfamilie* Nora has been on her own for quite a while (her son Pu, is already seven and his father is remarried). Towards the end of the narrative, both women enter a new relationship with a man from their past, who proves to be compatible in almost every way.

The mythological foundation and relevant history for many of the characters and themes in *Kai und die Liebe zu den Modellen* are provided in the first two parts of the trilogy. The first volume provides a matriarchal mythology that is realistically linked to the second and third by reincarnation and the validation of women's friendships and also explores the relationship between women and nature, represented in the second and third volumes by the 'green world' of the urban park. The middle volume provides the transition from idealism to realism, as the heroine attains brief contact with her magical origins in the city park, in which she also enjoys outings with her lovers. By befriending various women artists, Amy learns about life through their life stories. In the latter two volumes, the role of art is juxtaposed to that of nature in the first, as art becomes a source of refuge and strength for Amy's women friends and later for Amy herself, as it opens the door
to new possibilities and provides freedom from stereotyped sex-roles. In part one, Amaryllis is identified with ancient beliefs and rituals associating women with the moon, fertility, unity and the powers of death and rebirth, in part two Amy becomes the archetype of a woman as product of the male imagination, as she is transformed into a being without a history and in part three, Amy represents the archetype of the modern woman as divided self (1).

In *Kai und die Liebe zu den Modellen*, Amy is in a tentative relationship with the father of her five year old son Kai. She wants to establish an egalitarian relationship with Klemens, in which both parents carry equal responsibility for their child, share the workload at home and have equal time and opportunity to pursue their career. But Klemens is too conventional in his views on childcare and domesticity and too inflexible in his character to be able to come to terms with such an arrangement. Amy is thus confronted with a situation, which does not allow for self-realisation and, in challenging the concept that she, as a woman, must renounce her identity for reasons of personal and financial security, takes an important step towards emancipation:


Klemens' role is crucial to Frischmuth's stance reflecting Hofmannsthal's idea of Conservative Revolution; not only is he the first son to be born into the von Weitersleben family matriarch, he is also the first father to know of his paternity.
Thus Klemens represents the turning point in a long-standing tradition of women bearing and raising children on their own. Not only was he not raised by his mother, Sophie Silber, but in a foster home, but he is Kai's father. Yet despite his untraditional background, Klemens' outlook on life is conventional. In portraying Klemens in this manner, Frischmuth shows that behaviour and attitude are due to social conditioning and not biological make-up. When juxtaposed to Kai, the second to break the family tradition, Frischmuth reinforces her belief that social change by evolution is possible. Kai is much more open to alternatives (hence the title, *Kai und die Liebe zu den Modellen*). He is indiscriminate of age, sex and culture in his choice of friends, wears clothes of either sex and plays untypical games. His love for nature draws him to the city park, in which he befriends Herwater, the former 'Wasserman', who, like Amy, has been transformed from spirit to human, and he himself proclaims his favourite colour to be 'green'.

The difficulty in establishing a good relationship with a man in contemporary Western society is introduced in part two of the trilogy and experienced first-hand by Amy in part three. Amy, who believes it unjust for women to carry the full responsibility for childcare and housekeeping themselves, speculates on the outcome of her relationship to Klemens realistically, as she knows that resentment for a partner is bound to kill off love in time:


Amy's dilemma of whether or not to follow Klemens highlights the problem modern couples face, when considering separation for similar reasons. By using the term 'nachkommen lassen' Frischmuth also addresses the typical dilemma the wives of guest-workers experience while waiting for their husbands to summon
them (2). Thus Amy's experience is not an individual one. Although the problem
does not arise until almost the end of the novel and when it does, it is resolved
undramatically, the ailing relationship between Amy and Klemens plays a central
role throughout the text. The inevitable break-up is implied at the very beginning,
in which the collision between model trains mirrors the fate of their irreconcilable
differences:

Klemens fährt mit einem Güterzug, der viele Waggons nachzieht, in die
entgegengesetzte Richtung, aber da mein Personenzug schneller ist und die Schienen
einen Kreisbilden, ist der Zusammenstoß unvermeidlich. [KLM, 28].

In the depiction of Amy's experiences with Klemens, who on the one hand,
lives in a separate apartment, leads a separate life and has a totally different
perspective on life, but on the other, enjoys the comforts of home when it suits
him, Frischmuth exposes the one-dimensional nature of heterosexual relationships.
Whilst Klemens is quite happy to continue things the way they are, having the
freedom to choose the conditions and the degree of his contribution towards his
family, Amy has higher expectations of his involvement in family matters and
speculates alternative solutions:

Am Anfang hatte ich Klemens manchmal gefragt, wie er es sich denn vorstellte.
Ich wollte wissen, was er von uns erwartet, inwieweit seine Vorstellungen über das
hinausgeht, was wir so an Gemeinsamkeit zuwege bringen. Aber er hat nur mit:
ich bin froh, daß es euch beide gibt, geantwortet. Du mußt mir Zeit lassen, ich
habe zu wenig Spielraum. Und so neige ich von Mal zu Mal mehr dazu, nach
Lösungen zu suchen, die nur mehr Kai und mich betreffen. Denn Kai spielt mit.
[KLM, 8].

As a working mother, who must organise her time, in order to cope with both
roles, Amy is often put out by Klemens' sudden appearances, having looked
forward to an evening to herself. Moreover, Klemens usually arrives, when Kai
is already in bed and his assistance is no longer required:
Should Kai, by chance, be still awake, then Klemens makes it obvious to Amy that he finds Kai a burden:


Klemens, who does not even attempt to view matters from Amy's perspective, but regards his professional success his first priority with legitimate grounds, represents the archetype of the modern professional male. His ambition and self-preoccupation have clouded his perspective on other, equally important life matters:


The fact that his heartrendering speech does not cloud Amy's vision brings to light, that women should not fall for the guiles appealing to their supposedly uncensored compassion, which is expected of them since childhood. Amy is poignantly aware, that the degree to which Klemens sacrifices himself cannot at all be measured to the degree, to which she sacrifices herself for both him and Kai. Whenever Klemens visits them, he is demanding and expects to be the centre of attention. He is resentful towards Amy when she is not at home and accuses her of spending too much time with her girlfriends [KLM, 25], which is not at all the case. In fact, one of Amy's major complaints, is the fact, that she has had very
little contact with her former girlfriends since Kai's birth [KLM, 104], thus reinforcing the reality of women's isolation within the home once they decide to become full-time mothers. On the other hand, Klemens expects Amy to be understanding, when he does not keep an appointment [KLM, 112] and does not understand that his inconsiderateness has robbed her of the opportunity to pursue an alternative activity, had she known he was not coming.

Klemens' behaviour, which is typical of the male in a traditional family setting, is no doubt a reflection of his upbringing. He likes to be served by Amy [KLM, 18], but ignores Amy on the rare occasions he serves himself [KLM, 19]. After realising, that Klemens and she will never reach an agreement, Amy contemplates alternative relationships. The first involves another woman, the second, a group of individuals, who share mutual interests and perspectives on life and the third, a man, to whom she relates on almost every level and who as such, proves to be the most compatible. In each of the above possibilities, age, sex and culture are insignificant.

Amy's relationship to Helene is based on a working relationship, which, since Amy works mainly at home, is not restricted to the workplace. When Helene makes advances towards Amy, she is not repulsed and, although she does not respond, she can envisage a sexual relationship with Helene under different conditions:

Ich kann es mir vorstellen, sogar gut vorstellen, wie es ist, wenn Frauen einander lieben, mit einer Leidenschaft der Ausschließlichkeit, bei der die Größe des Gefühls über alle Einschränkungen hinweggeht. Ich kann mir aber auch vorstellen, wie man sich fühlen muß, wenn man die Liebe zu einer anderen Frau als Wundentrost, als gerade aufgeworfene Möglichkeit ausprobieren will, um die Theorien auf ihren praktischen Lustgewinn hin zu überprüfen.....Mein Herz klopft bei der Vorstellung, wie es gewesen wäre, wenn ich alles einfach an mich herankommen hätte lassen. [KLM, 63,65]

Thus Frischmuth does not reject lesbianism as a viable alternative, but suggests that compatibility is the key, regardless to sex. Amy does not allow her
relationship to Helene to evolve beyond friendship, because she recognises her as Klemens' female counterpart and does not want to reproduce that type of relationship. Like Klemens, Helene puts her career first:

Helene hat an diesem ihren freien Sonntag an mich gedacht... Helene hat aus sich was gemacht, obwohl es aussieht, als wäre sie mit der Zeit einfach so geworden [KLM, 48/9].

And like Klemens, she has little patience with children, which Kai senses and consequently behaves in a manner typical of his age, making the situation very uncomfortable for Amy:

Jedenfalls kann ich es in Helene denken hören. Erwachsene dürfen sich nicht von Kindern tyrannisieren lassen. Kinder müssen lernen, daß sie nicht immer der Mittelpunkt sind... Und Kai wird um das, was er für sein Recht hält, kämpfen. Während Helene es für selbstverständlich hält, daß Erwachsene in allen Fällen am selben Strang ziehen...Ich sehe alles voraus, die Kollision der Wünsche, die darauffolgende Debatte, das Mißverständnis. Daß ich immer wieder auf solche Situationen hereingefallen muß. [KLM, 56]

Thus, although Amy enjoys Helene's company and considers her an invaluable friend and co-worker, she realises that the relationship cannot be taken any further, since they are entirely incompatible on a private level:

Wenn ich mir überlege, mit wem ich mir so eine Haushgemeinschaft überhaupt vorstellen kann. Helene würde mich irritieren, und das nicht nur, weil sie begutachten soll, was ich schreibe, sondern weil ich das Gefühl habe, daß jeder von uns einen bestimmten Umkreis braucht [KLM, 200]

Getting to know one another thoroughly before entering a relationship is an important step, which she stresses to Kai, when he asks, whom he should marry:

Laß dir Zeit, habe ich zu ihm gesagt, so etwas muß man sich unendlich gut überlegen. [KLM, 66].

154
In contrast to her experiences with Klemens and Helene, Amy envisions living with Rosa, Pembe and the twins [KLM, 200], because, in spite of their differing ages and cultural backgrounds, they share similar views and genuinely care for one another. Thus Frischmuth reintroduces the theme of children playing a significant role in social change:

Die Selbstverständlichkeit, mit der diese beiden Mädchen miteinander und mit den Kindern in Liebe umgehen, zieht mich zu ihnen hin. [KLM, 118]

The friendly discussions and debates between Rosa and Pembe over their cultural traditions, beliefs and personal experiences serve to broaden their world view. The first debate revolves around the issue of the Oriental tradition of arranged marriages and Pembe's perspective on Western marriages echoes Jelinek's perspective in her novel *Die Liebhaberinnen*:

Das ist nicht wahr. Auch hier werden die meisten Frauen an jemanden verheiratet. Zum Beispiel wenn sie ein Kind kriegen oder eine Wohnung beantragen oder ans Haushaltgründungsgeld kommen wollen oder wenn sie von zu Hause weg wollen. [KLM, 78]

The second debate directly addresses Amy's model based on the extended family setting, in which problems and responsibilities are shared, thus lessening the burden for mothers, who, within the Western nuclear family setting and even moreso as sole-parents, are made responsible for every aspect of their children's physical and emotional well-being. Pembe, who has grown up in two cultures and is acquainted with both situations, defends the Turkish model:

...es ist viel leichter, wenn alles zusammenhängt. Und wenn alles zusammenhängt, dann mußt du auch nichts allein machen. Und wenn deine Eltern dir helfen und du deinen Eltern hilfst, dann werden auch deine Kinder dir helfen und du wirst deinen Kindern helfen. [KLM, 182]
The last person Amy mentions in her extended family is Herwater [KLM, 200], who, as Amy's male counterpart, is indeed the most promising and most compatible of all of Amy's potential partners. Just as the inevitable break-up between Amy and Klemens is inferred from the very beginning, so too is Amy's reunion with Herwater:

Ich habe Sehnsucht nach Wasser...In unserer Sehnsucht nach einem Wasser, wenn schon nicht klar, dann zumindest fließend, würden wir gewiß auch auf die Wassermänner beziehungsweise den Wassermann kommen...Wie anders würde er wirklich werden müssen? Würde die Metamorphose seinen Charakter verzerrt haben, oder wäre er immer noch liebenswürdig? War er das überhaupt? Wäre er im Kampf ums Wasser nicht schon früher aufsässig geworden? [KLM, 15,16,17]

Like Amy, Herwater undergoes his metamorphosis for a universal good and, as such, is as equally a positive role model as Amy. Both Herwater and Amy are concerned with environmental, social and political issues on a global scale (although Amy admits to having lost touch with political issues since Kai's birth) and both genuinely believe in peace and equality amongst all peoples and in the conservation of all life forms on earth. Herwater also contemplates workable alternatives, that will generate change for the benefit of future generations. This aspect unfolds in the games he devises for the miniature society of Austrian and Turkish children he meets in the city park and his game reinforces the very ideas that Amy conveys in her conversations and stories (3):

..was ihr hier auf dem Blatt seht, ist die Welt...Hier hast du einen Würfel. Damit kannst du dir alles erwürfeln, was auf der Welt nütig ist, um dich oder eine Pflanze oder ein Tier am Leben zu erhalten. Die Karten stellen alles mögliche dar, Lebewesen, Gewächse, Dinge...Die Zeit spielt keine große Rolle. Wichtig ist, daß du richtig fährst. Du mußt deine Karte durchbringen...Gewonnen hat, wer die meisten günstigen Umstände für seine Karte erwürtelt hat...Wenn du also nur vier Umstände für die Karte Baum hast, die aber für den Baum optimal sind, hast du gewonnen, selbst wenn ein anderer sechs Umstände für die Karte Kind hat, er aber bei weitem nicht alle erforderlichen erwürtelt hat. [KLM, 134-5]
Despite Amy's reservations after her experience with Klemens [KLM, 207] and Herwater's reservations, because of his strong political commitment [KLM, 197], the relationship between Amy and Herwater evolves naturally and the probability of them remaining together is at least implied:

Es kam mir so vor, als würde ich Herwater schon viel länger kennen als Klemens. Und wie er so neben mir saß, konnte ich mir viel unter seiner Freundschaft vorstellen. [KLM, 207].

The character of Nora in Die Ferienfamilie is very similar to that of Amy. Like Amy, Nora has experienced a failed relationship with the father of her son and is on the verge of establishing a much more promising one with someone from her past, based on a partnership, in which both parties share the responsibilities, duties and pleasures involved in the caring for children. On a summer vacation - with her son Pu, her stepson Fenek and her sister's daughter, Laia - Nora reunites with Lajosch, a fellow student from her High School days and their attraction rekindles. Like Herwater, Lajosch has no family of his own and although he is not accustomed to children, relates to them well and does not erect the barriers adults usually do between themselves and children whom they regard as a burden.

Although Lajosch is at first quite confused by Nora's 'holiday' family set-up, he is willing to adapt and accepts Nora's views. Like Amy, Nora believes that "alle Menschen sind aller Kinder Eltern" [K, 68]. As this text is in a sense a continuation of Kai und die Liebe zu den Modellen, the model of communal living with the inclusion of a father figure becomes realised, if only for the short remainder of their holiday together (although the activities themselves do not really deviate from those typical of each sex):

Während Nora die Betten machte, spielte Lajosch eine Partie Schach mit Fenek, Laja goß die Blumen an den Fenstern und Pu verschwand tatsächlich mit dem Schuhputzzeug vor die Tür hinaus. [FF, 112].
Like Herwater (and unlike Klemens and Vater Eins), Lajosch does not consider children an obstacle or burden to his relationship with Nora, but part of it. In turn, the children integrate him into their inner circle, as Herwater is integrated into that of Kai and his friends. But as in *Kai und die Liebe zu den Modellen*, Frischmuth highlights some of the many problems and unexpected mishaps, that can and do arise even in the most favourable of circumstances. Although the text as a whole is not as idealistic as the above quote tends to suggest, it includes scenes depicting jealousy, friction, personal insecurities and accidents, as they indeed occur in life. Moreover, disharmonies arise in the Nora-Lajosch relationship. The first one occurs when they first reunite and Lajosch employs words, such as 'sich opfern' with regard to adult-child relationships and 'bieten' with regard to male-female relationships, making Nora very sceptical about a future involvement [FF, 76]. The children also fear Lajosch's initial intrusion and become possessive of Nora, thus heightening the tension of that first afternoon. Nevertheless, Nora is pleased at the end of the day to have met up with Lajosch again, thus tipping the scales in a positive direction:

Und erst als alle im Bett waren, hatte Nora sich wieder dem angenehmen Gefühl überlassen können, jemanden nach so vielen Jahren wiedergefunden zu haben, ohne daß sie von seiner Veränderung enttäuscht gewesen wäre. [FF, 80]

Another unpleasantness occurs when the children discover Lajosch in Nora's bed. Since they are not being used to a man staying overnight, the atmosphere remains tense throughout that day:

Es war nicht der erste Sonntag, den sie miteinander verbrachten, und doch war diesmal alles ein wenig anders. Wann immer sich irgendwo etwas spielte, kam eine leise Befangenheit auf, und die Kinder, die Lajosch einerseits als Spielgefährten schätzen, mochten es nicht sehr, wenn er sich vermittend zwischen sie und Nora stellte. Auch Lajosch war unsicherer als sonst, sobald es um etwas ging, das er
As it is the aspect of stabilising impending imbalances in inter-personal relationships, that Frischmuth wishes to stress in both of these texts, without ever actually portraying either relationship (Amy-Herwater, Nora-Lajosch) beyond its initial stage, but only suggesting the possibility of a positive outcome, it is not possible to regard Frischmuth's alternative models as exemplary in the long-term. However, since Frischmuth also emphasises, that such alternative relationships are subject to the willingness on both parties to compromise and adjust to one another, it would be unrealistic to take them further without reducing their credibility.

4.4.3. THE SINGLE WOMAN: BARBARA FRISCHMUTH'S BINDUNGEN

Fanny in *Bindungen* and Christine in *Schönes Licht* portray the image of the single woman, who is both unattached and childless, having centered her life upon an education and a career. Both protagonists feel incomplete, unfulfilled and discontented with their private lives and believe that a stable relationship with a man will change their lives.

In Frischmuth's *Bindungen*, the protagonist goes through the motions of shedding her own identity and taking on that of her sister, in the hope of finding the fulfilment she did not find in her career-oriented life. Through the conversations with her sister and a series of flashbacks and inner monologues, the reader gains insight into the events which bring about to her breakdown: i.e. sibling rivalry, a fixation with both her domineering mother and absent father, a doomed relationship with a surrogate father, a man fifty years her senior, a series of unsuccessful relationships with other men and her last major affair, which is the actual catalyst. The inner monologues serve to illustrate the protagonist's healing process, which
comes about as the narration unfolds, as Fanny gradually manages to confront, deal with and resolve the above issues.

Fanny's search for her true identity and her profession as an archeologist highlights the role her search for clues and answers from her past plays in her recovery. Her inner monologues are mainly addressed to the man with whom she was last involved and with whom she hoped to find happiness. She feels hurt and betrayed, because he gave her the impression, that their relationship was solid, whilst in fact, he took every opportunity of replacing her with someone willing to play the traditional role and subordinate herself to him:


Through Fanny's conversations with Malwine, it becomes evident that Fanny's unresolved conflicts from her past contribute significantly towards her state of mind. Whilst Malwine, the younger and less intellectual of the two sisters, holds the mother in high regard, Fanny is cynical and bitter toward her. Because of her likeness to her mother, Fanny has a heightened insight into her mother's character and, having inherited her mother's independent streak, fears for a lonely existence, should she give up on relationships like her mother [B, 42]:

Plötzlich lache ich. Genauso dröhrend, wie Mutter immer gelacht hat, nur daß mein Stimmvolumen kleiner ist. Dennoch fährt Malwine zusammen, als wäre ich ein Gespenst... Sie war ein bißchen verhindert, das ist alles. Sie war ein verhinderte Operndirektorin, eine verhinderte Landschaftsgestalterin...und was weiß ich, woran man sie noch Zeit ihres Lebens gehindert hat...Und weil so viele Verhinderte in ihr waren, mußte sie immer der Big Boß sein, der das Geld nach Hause brachte und dafür seine Ruhe haben wollte. [B, 43].
During the course of Fanny's stay at Malwine's country house, she is witness to an apparently perfect existence and impenetrable bond between Malwine, Jakob, Zeno and the dog a hence way of life she has never experienced, but would like to experience first-hand:


Fanny's scepticism to the apparent facade nevertheless prevails: "All diese Beschwichtigungsrituale. Die verstellen einem nur die Sicht, auf das, was man wirklich will" [B, 26], and entices her to challenge the seemingly impenetrable barrier. Indeed, she discovers, that her sister's lifestyle is a charade, like the facade of her newly renovated house. Thus, her sister: "die einfach alles kann, Bilder malen, Kinder erziehen...ein Haus instandsetzen und auch noch himmlisch für ihre Gäste sorgen" [B, 29], leads a very shallow existence, that can be easily penetrated by breaking the routine. Fanny gradually takes over, first Malwine's dog, then Malwine's son and finally Malwine's husband, who all crave to break out.

Fanny's conscious attempts to boycott Malwine's homelife (such as digging up her garden and upsetting the balance in the household [B, 75-78]) are fundamental to her healing process, not only with regard to helping her establish her true identity, but also with coming to terms with her long-standing rivalry towards her sister:

Du hattest immer deinen Jakob. Ihr hattet Zeit für einander, ich hatte keine Zeit. Ihr hattet den Nerv, abends zu Hause zu bleiben und Radio zu hören, um Geld für das nächste Konzert zu sparen. Ich saß in der Bibliothek. Das, was ich wollte, dafür lohnte es sich gar nicht erst zu sparen.... Da mußt du dann hin und wieder mit jemanden schlafen, einfach, um zu spüren, daß deine Glieder noch alle intakt sind, daß du dich unter Umständen noch für etwas anderes interessieren könntest. Es geht ja da um die Möglichkeiten...Und darzwischen hast du immer das Gefühl, daß es doch nicht der Mühe wert ist, obwohl du es immer wieder tun mußt, und daß Maurice doch recht hat, wenn er sagt: Max du solltest jemanden haben, der sich wirklich um
After failing in every relationship, because of her refusal to renounce her independence [B, 46], Fanny decides to take on Malwine's traditional roles as wife, mother and lover. This decision is made not entirely because of her jealousy towards Malwine, but also because it enables her to take on the identity of the woman, who made the icon of her past, Maurice, so inaccessible to her. In recreating and reenacting the past in the role she had never had a chance to play, Fanny hopes to experience that of which she believes to have been denied and perhaps discover true happiness:


Fanny's search for a surrogate father in her relationship to Maurice can be attributed to her fixation with her "unschuldige(m), vorzeitig entrückte(m), sich nie blossgestellt habende(m)" father [B, 83]. Maurice had been as inaccessible as her father. By calling her 'Max', Fanny is not only denied her identity as a woman in her professional life, but also given the distinct message, that she, as a woman, does not exist. Since Maurice is not only her teacher and companion, but also "der einzige mit dem ich mir alles im Leben hätte vorstellen können." [B, 56], the liaison (Max and Moritz) is doomed from the start, because Max has been happily married for forty-five years and has no intention of taking their relationship any further:

The factor of inaccessibility is thus another major attraction to Jakob, who, like Fanny's father and Maurice, also maintains his distance and since Maurice and the father are the only men, with whom Fanny could envisage the perfect relationship, she hopes to experience with Jakob what she did not experience with her father and Maurice. Although Jakob initially feigns comradship, but appears disinterested on a personal level, his defences gradually weaken and Fanny's wish to be in Malwine's shoes realises itself on a family outing, during which Malwine remains at home:

So ist es also, wenn sie zu dritt sind, nur daß anstelle von Malwine jetzt ich neben Jakob gehe. [B, 85]

Similarly, her desire to have a man like Jakob [B, 85] also becomes reality on the evening of the outing. Despite the passionate beginning, Jakob is unable to maintain an erection and Fanny, upon realising that a perfect relationship does not exist and that someone is always bound to get hurt in the process (in this case, it is Malwine), is cured of both her rivalry towards her sister and the desire to have the type of man who has determined the nature of all subsequent relationships:


Fanny leaves for Vienna the following day, feeling, for the first time, genuine pity for Malwine [B, 122] for the pain she has caused her, but also knowing that for her, there will never be a man like Jakob [B, 116], because she, in turn, does not want to be like Malwine:

Ein Mann wie Jakob. Jetzt ist mir also auch das widerfahren. Nur daß es ganz anders ist. Es gibt also keinen Mann wie Jakob für mich. [B, 116].
4.4.4. THE SINGLE WOMAN: BRIGITTE SCHWAIGER'S

_SCHÖNES LICHT_

The title _Schönes Licht_, refers to the light in the protagonist's apartment, upon which her lovers comment as being either aesthetic or, as in the case of her last lover, unaesthetic. As far as the content is concerned, _Schönes Licht_ can be regarded as a reiteration and continuation of Schwaiger's earlier novels (1), but instead of concentrating upon the themes of childhood, marriage and death of the father _Schönes Licht_ can be understood as a gap-filler candidly portrayed by a third person narrator, the above themes being interwoven contextually. Yet, the absence of the sardonic wit and psychological insight of Schwaiger's previous protagonists reduces the impact of this novel as a whole and gives it rather a tone of lamentation.

The text is nevertheless worth exploring, simply because it discloses many of the external and internal constraints imposed upon women: women as writers and as sexual partners and exposes the degree of conditioning women undergo to hinder them from becoming assertive and independent human beings. The narrative revolves around Christine Leitenmeier's life, beginning at age seventeen, when she first arrives in Vienna to pursue a literary career and ending at age thirty, when she is an established writer. The protagonist hopes to achieve two things in her life - to write a bestselling novel and find "[den] Mann fürs Leben" [SL, 155]; only the first becomes reality. The second, finding the right man, never eventuates and with each ill-fated love affair, she becomes increasingly depressed, her despair in the end, dominating her entire existence.

In that light, the heroine of this novel cannot be regarded as a role model for women, because she does not gain control over the part of her life, which is causing her anguish, in spite of her repeatedly negative experiences with men,
but remains stagnant in the phase, which is the cause of the problem, namely the love-hate relationship she experiences with her father. This in turn affects her relationships with people, particularly the men in her life, and dominates her political views, because, no matter how hard she tries, she cannot free herself from her father's value system. Because Schönes Licht gives little insight into the motivation and reasons behind the protagonist's actions and decisions, but relates mainly her need for contact and physical closeness with men, Schwaiger's earlier works will be referred to at times, to provide the reference points necessary for certain evaluations to be made. The text itself will be examined on three levels, firstly, with regard to Christine's professional life, secondly, her social life and thirdly, her private life.

Already at age seventeen, when Christine first arrives in Vienna to pursue her literary career, she discovers that the l'art pour l'art concept does not apply to women. The journalist, who published her prize-winning essay Worauf es im Leben ankommt (2) tries, but fails to seduce and coerce her into wearing a mini-dress and a 'Jean Seberg' hairstyle, in order to become more marketable. Christine remains in Vienna for three years, studying Germanistik, working in the theatre and writing short stories, emulating the style of her ultimate writer-role model, Francoise Sagan.

At twenty, Christine moves to Spain, where she meets and marries Rafael. Rafael (Rolf in Wie kommt das Salz ins Meer) is a younger version of the protagonist's father, equally oppressive, but potentially much more violent. Her short and stormy marriage (depicted in Wie kommt das Salz ins Meer) is summed up in one paragraph in this text:

Rafael, ein Spanier, der gesagt hatte, er liebe sie mehr als die Luft, die er atme, entjungferte sie und brachte sie auf die Kunstschule. Sie heirateten, aber wegen ihrer Phantasien, die sie ihm übersetzte, nannte er sie Ausländerin, Hure und Schlampe. Und als er sie fortschickte, redeten ihre Eltern nicht mehr mit ihr, und sie wollte eigentlich sterben....Sie erzählte jedem, der sie fragte, ob sie wirklich mit einem Torero verheiratet gewesen sei: Nein. Aber mit einem
With renewed aspirations to become a successful writer, Christine returns to Vienna at twenty-five and works as a secretary for a publishing agency. The position of secretary exposes Christine to two kinds of exploitation, which, in essence, are interrelated, divulging the typical situation 'new' office girls experience. The first is because of her sex and the second because of her subordinate position, performing menial tasks for male superiors:

Christines Arbeit im Verlag bestand im Telefon Abheben, Karteien-Ordnen, Menschen, die durch ihr Zimmer zum Chef gingen, freundlich zu begrüßen, dem Chef dramaturgen Dr. Mayr Briefe zu tippen, vor allem eine intensive Korrespondenz mit Ernesto Digitti, dem internationalen italienischen Regiestar. [SL, 17].

But in view of her professional life, Christine has only one aim in mind. No longer as naive in sexual matters, as she was at seventeen [SL, 6,7], she takes a stand to unwanted sexual advances: "Mit jedem gehst du ins Bett, nur mit mir nicht." [SL, 12]. She is dutiful at work, gaining the appraisal of her superiors [SL, 21], whilst at the same time continuously expanding her proficiency in the literary field by reading all the manuscripts other writers send in. Moreover, she writes a novel, based on her life story, which becomes a phenomenal success.

Yet, Christine discovers, that being a famous author has its set-backs. Not only must she endure a string of tedious interviews, photo sessions and talk shows, she is now open to a new kind of exploitation, namely that of being preyed upon by people, who only want to be associated with her because of her literary fame [SL, 111; 138; 197].

From the perspective of Christine's social life, she is a misfit in the environment, to which she wants to belong. Although she does make some
good friends later on (the Pfeiffers, the Taborskis, the Albertonis and the Hutters), matters are complicated by the fact that each of the husbands (all of whom engage in extra-marital affairs) make advances towards her, which, in each case, she declines (3). But, initially, at her workplace, Christine is subject to ridicule because of her provincial origins [SL, 13] and ignored by her peers, including the left-wing radical women, whose 'near nakedness' [SL, 15] and overt support of pornography intimidate her [SL, 15]. In turn, Christine's introverted, insecure and self-conscious nature reinforces this alienation [SL, 20, 21], making her equally unapproachable (symbolised by the desk protecting her from others):

Christine kochte Tee für Dr. Mayr und war froh, acht Stunden am Tag einen Schreibtisch zwischen sich und den Menschen zu haben. [SL, 18]

The people with whom she would like to associate are authors, but, as Christine discovers through various affairs, they too, are highly discriminating and not as admirable as they appear:

Man kam aber mit Autoren nur ins Gespräch, wenn man entweder sehr hübsch war und dienstbereit, oder wenn man selber schrieb. [SL, 21]

Christine's motives for writing the novel suggest a desperate need for acceptance and for coming to terms with her past:

Christine schrieb also ein ganzes Buch, um zu beweisen, daß sie keine Kleinbürgerin war, keine Bürgerliche, keine Liberale, nichts, eigentlich nach dieser Ehe nicht einmal mehr sich selbst. Und nie gewesen, eigentlich, weil sie aus einer bürgerlichen Familie stammte. Noch dazu einer Nazi-Familie. [SL, 26].

167
Primarily, Christine wants to be accepted by her father as a mature individual and a successful writer in her own right ("und gerade ihm, wenn auch nicht der Mutter, hatte sie diese Freude machen wollen" [SL, 96]). The fact that Chistine fails to obtain her father's approval, firstly because he does not appreciate having his name on everyone's lips [SL, 62] and secondly, because he resents the fact that she associates with Jews, dampens her joy over her success:

Jetzt hatten 'lauter Juden' ihr Buch gelobt, und ihr Verleger war ein Halbjude, viele waren Vierteljuden, lauter halbe, viertel- und kaum jemals ganze Menschen standen ihr gegenüber. Der Vater redete nichts mit ihr, wenn sie heimkam, und es war, als müßte sie, weil sie doch alles, was sie dachte, zugleich auch vor sich geschrieben sah, das Wort 'Buch' in Anführungsstriche setzen. Juden gab es. Bücher gab es nicht. [SL, 96]

The bestseller thus turns out to be of little therapeutic value, not only in view of Christine's relationship to her father, but also in view of her coming to terms with her past and outgrowing the value-system she has acquired from her father. Christine continues to stereotype people and situations according to either her own experiences ("Und außerdem, spanisch sprechenden Menschen traut sie nicht" [SL, 25]) and her father's biased value system, thus worshipping her superior for not being a Jew, but an aristocrat [SL, 96] and choosing a painter with an authentically Austrian name ('Holzleitner' [SL, 93]), eliminating in particular, those of Czech and (disguised) Jewish origin:

Sie war nationalsozialistisch erzogen, und unter den Tschechen gab es nun einmal keine guten Menschen. Wer wüßte, was sich hinter einem Vick oder Wotruba verbarg. Ein Politiker hieß Maleta, das heißt auf spanisch 'Koffer'. Vielleicht ein als Tscheche getarnter Jude. [SL, 93].

In this text, the Jewish issue is concentrated upon to a greater extent than in Schwaiger's earlier novels. Whilst in Wie kommt das Salz ins Meer only the father's views are articulated, in Lange Abwesenheit Birer is allocated the role
of defending the Jews, but indeed, turns out to be the father's Jewish counterpart. In Schönes Licht, the Nazi-Jew conflict within the protagonist, as thematicised in Lange Abwesenheit is elaborated upon, not only in the protagonist's affair with Walter Slavik (Birer in Lange Abwesenheit), but also in her subsequent affairs with Dave and particularly Daniel, the most political of them all. As in Lange Abwesenheit, the protagonist's feelings towards Jews are extremely ambivalent. On the one hand, she has been conditioned to be biased towards them [SL. 95] and readily articulates her father's perspective, whenever a debate arises:

...auch sie hatte vor noch ein paar Jahren in Spanien erklärt, an einem Tisch sitzend mit ihrem Mann, mit der Schwiegermutter, Gäste waren da, sie erklärte den Spaniern auf spanisch, warum es notwendig gewesen war, daß man die Juden alle umbrachte. Sie hatte viele Begriffe im Kopf, die ließen sich schwer übersetzen. Sie verteidigte nicht nur ihren Vater, sondern Hitler, denn für sie war der Hitler der Vater gewesen. [SL, 214]

But on the other hand, she wants to be at one with them [SL, 185] and resents the downgrading remarks made about them by her former friends [SL, 94]. Thus, she wants to exculpate herself for the role her father symbolically plays in the persecution of the Jewish race:

Daniel war Jude. Christine wollte sich und ihm beweisen, daß sie zwanglos mit Juden reden konnte. Sie hatte doch an dem, was ihre Eltern gewesen waren, nicht die geringste Schuld [SL, 223]

The conflict within the protagonist manifests itself in two ways. She either wants to reproduce her relationship with her father and resolve it through her lover, as in the case of her marriage to Rafael, or she wants to rebel against her father and his value system and hence the status quo (also apparent in the reason for having written her novel) by having affairs with Jews:

In both cases, the protagonist intention fails to be met, as neither Rafael nor her Jewish lovers accept her in her own right. In turn, she rejects them and their culture, as they have rejected her, each time changing sides and articulating the views of the opposition. Yet, the protagonist's many failed relationships with her Jewish lovers cannot only be attributed to her attitude towards them, but also to their attitude towards her as a non-Jew. Slavik 'hides' her from his friends [SL, 11], Dave is reluctant to have her accompany him to Israel to meet his family [SL, 48] and Daniel accuses her of being their enemy and ends the relationship on those grounds [SL, 228]. The protagonist is not only aware of their discrimination against her as a non-Jew, but also of the stereotype she portrays in their eyes:

Aber in Daniels Augen mußte sie eine Dumme, eine 'Goite', sein. Was immer das Wort hieß. 'Schickse' und 'Goite' hatte ein Psychiater ihr vor ein paar Jahren erklärt. Dieser Walter zeigt sich mit Ihnen nicht in der Öffentlichkeit, weil sie die Schickse sind. Eine Schickse ist in jüdischen Kreisen nicht angesehen. [SL, 185]

In turn, she takes the blame for the injustice they have endured upon her shoulders:

Due to constant rejection, the protagonist develops a low self-image. She considers herself not good enough to belong to either the dominant nor to the sub-culture, whilst, at the same time, there is an element of anger and cynicism at her position as an outcast, which, in turn, again suggests a strong desire to belong.

Christine associates with Jews on a professional level [SL, 96], on a social level (her best friend, Dietlinde Pfeiffer, is half Jewish [SL, 94]) and on a private level, since most of her lovers are Jews (which perhaps can also be attributed to their reputation as lovers, as it is in the case of Spaniards, hence her marriage to Rafael) and it is towards her lovers, that the protagonist's discriminatory views really come to the surface. Indeed, it is Christine's love life, that causes her the most anguish, to the point of having herself admitted into a clinic [SL, 122], due to constant suicide thoughts and heavy valium intake:

Die Männer waren wichtig, sie wollte einen Mann haben, wollte lieben, so als gäbe es keinen anderen Sinn auf dieser Welt. Sie war verblödet von den vielen Tabletten. Sie dachte: nur ein Leben mit einem Mann hat einen Sinn... Der Mann fürs Leben. Wo sollte sie gehen, welche Straße nehmen, sich in welches Kaffeehaus setzen, um ihn zu treffen? [SL, 154-155].

The lovers are all somehow connected to writing and the theatre and represent either the surrogate father type (Walter Slavik) or the Rolf-types (Anton Leitl, Dave, Daniel) or Albert types (Jürgen Tümler, Huber Lois) types (the protagonist's husband and lover in Wie kommt das Salz ins Meer) who reflect aspects of the qualities the protagonist both loves and despises in her father. Because the protagonist is emotionally unbalanced with regard to relationships, she seeks men, who are equally unbalanced and as such, each relationship is doomed from the start:
Sie war viel zu geschädigt, als daß sie sich einem normalen, netten Mann überhaupt zumuten wollte, sondern suchte sich lieber verstörte Männer aus, bei denen es nichts machte, daß auch sie verstört war. [SL, 26]

Nevertheless, the protagonist enters each affair in the hope, that somehow an equilibrium may be achieved that transcends her dilemma:

In ihrer Sehnsucht nach Glück hatte sie schon vielen ihr Bett angeboten. [SL, 204]

But the fact that the protagonist cannot actually bring herself to introducing any of her lovers to her father, who all resemble him in some way in character and status, and, as such, represent the love and security she is seeking from him, indicates that the protagonist has indeed not at all freed herself from her father-fixation. Furthermore, the fact, that the protagonist chooses lovers, who are either quite a bit older and potentially in a position to offer a woman security, but not in the position to offer it to her, since they are already attached (Slavik, Leitl, Lois, Tümler) or younger than she and have no intention of becoming attached to her, because of her non-Jewish background (Dave, Daniel), further indicates that the protagonist inherently has no desire to transcend her father fixation, but seeks to recreate her no-win situation with him with her lovers. This, in turn, is substantiated by the fact that the protagonist herself loses interest in her partners before the affair actually ends.

In light of the conflict within the protagonist, her attempts to repair her past and to create a future are unproductive, which, in turn, leads to emotional instability:

With each failed love-affair, the protagonist becomes increasingly sceptical about finding "[den] Mann fürs Leben", as a result of the cultural and sexual discrimination she has experienced herself and on part of her lovers, which she appears to be unable to resolve:

Männerfreundschaften, Männerbekanntschaften: mit einem Mann kannst du nicht befreundet sein. Entweder er will ins Bett oder will nicht ins Bett. Beides gleichermaßen irritierend, seit die Sexualität entdeckt ist. [SL, 155]

The novel nevertheless ends in hope; the heroine however does not become an active agent of change, but instead remains in her traditionally passive role, waiting to be 'chosen' by the right man, like Paula in Jelinek's Die Liebhaberinnen, however much more conscious of her predicament:

Christine hatte die jeweiligen Epochen in ihrem Leben nach Männern benannt. Männer, die ihren Weg gekreuzt hatten, obwohl sie gar keinen Weg ging. Sie stand und saß am Rande. Sie wartete. Auch wenn eine Hand käme, würde sie sagen: Nimm mich mit. [SL, 228].
4.5.1. WOMEN AS MOTHERS

Jelinek, Frischmuth and Schwaiger all challenge the ideology of motherhood from a different perspective. Jelinek attacks the traditional image of the mother as a benevolent, self-sacrificial being and portrays instead mothers, who are both victims and oppressors within a system, in whose power struggle they are trapped and from which they cannot escape. Already in her earlier novels, such as Michael, Ein Jugendbuch für die Infantilgesellschaft and Die Ausgesperrten, the mothers begin to take this shape, but it is not until her later novels, such as Die Klavierspielerin and Lust that her protagonists are older and the mothers become real characters, who play a central role in the text.

The mother of Schwaiger's protagonists conforms with the traditional image and it is the narrator, who exposes the self-deception and self-renunciation involved in her compliance with traditional standards. Frischmuth's mothers in Kai und die Liebe zu den Modellen and Die Ferienfamilie portray a positive alternative role model of the financially independent, self-assertive, yet committed single parent.

4.5.2. DEBUNKING THE MYTH OF THE MIDDLE-CLASS MOTHER:

The mother of Schwaiger's protagonists lives in a nuclear family situation and projects the image of the perfect mother, who lives up to traditional expectations. It is through the narrator/daughter that insight is given into the reality of the mother's situation, in which self-realisation and self-expression are totally suppressed. Coming from the generation of Post World War II mothers, who genuinely accepted the ideology of 'Kinder, Küche und Kirche', which stresses motherhood as one of the three essential dimensions of true womanhood (the other two being those of wife and housekeeper), she portrays the stereotype of the proper woman,
as dealt with in the Chapter on Frischmuth's *Die Klosterschule*, no doubt due to a similar indoctrination.

Like so many young women after the war, the protagonist's mother also gives up her profession as a nurse to become a full-time wife, mother and housekeeper, thus renouncing her independance to become fully dependant upon her husband. This strategy of coercing women to withdraw from their war-time role within the labour force and return to the home was particularly prominent in the 1950s, reinforced by a new preoccupation with child psychology, which defined childrearing as a woman's primary role and which blamed a mother's work outside the home for the ill-effects it has on her children, as a result of maternal neglect (1).

As the wife of a country town doctor, the protagonist's mother does not need to supplement her husband's income, which can even afford to employ paid help with the housework and the child-minding [MSD, 23-28]. Yet, personal fulfillment is not an issue, as her time is consumed by catering for her family's needs and upholding the law and order in the household. Her largely unconscious collaboration with her husband's value system reveals inauthenticity of thought and behaviour on her part and results in her playing a much less significant role as a parent than the father. Furthermore, she does not even attempt to establish a bond with any of her four daughters, which can be attributed to several reasons.

Firstly, the mother feels inept for failing to provide her husband with an heir and consequently resents her daughters for being born the wrong sex. Secondly, the mother sees her own reflection in her daughters and, due to a lack of self-esteem, it is a negative one. Thus, the stereotypical mother-daughter relationship, as depicted in psychoanalytic theory applies to this situation (2). Thirdly, as the mother willingly subordinates herself to her husband and makes no effort to create her own identity, but allows her roles as wife, mother and housekeeper to be
defined on her behalf [LA, 23, 24], the daughters do not regard her as an emulative role model and go their separate ways:

Vier Schwestern, alle erwachsen, keine verheiratet, eine mit einem ledigen Kind [LA, 83].

The narrator, on the other hand, identifies with her father [LA, 26], whose status and charisma makes him a much more impressive role model than her mother and wants to establish a bond with him. But the father has no intention of reciprocating because she is a girl:

Söhne hat er sich gewünscht. [LA, 90].

The father remains the undisputable head of the household even during his frequent absences. The mother neither undermines his authority, nor does she ever join forces with her daughters to challenge his power. She openly takes the father's side when he downgrades his daughter, letting everyone know whose side she is on. When the father is at home, the mother protects his interests and readily snaps at her daughter, should 'inconsiderate' behaviour be displayed:


The above quote clearly depicts the alienation between mother and daughter and affirms the daughter's place within the family hierarchy. The daughter feels unloved, not because of her actions, but because of her sex, which in turn deflates her own self-image. The mother-daughter alienation depicted above is again brought up in *Lange Abwesenheit*, when the mother does not allow her daughter to
approach her dying father [LA, 96-99]. In this case, however, it not to protect the father's interests, but her own, for fear of being replaced. The daughter, although now in her twenties, still does not confront her mother, but instead, uses every opportunity to touch her sleeping father during her mother's brief absences:

So wie sie ganz langsam nebensichinander gehen, die Köpfe einander zugeneigt, ist es, als teilten sie ein Geheimnis. Sie sind jetzt Verbündete in der Fremde.... Aber wenn Mutter aus dem Zimmer geht, schlage ich die Betttdecke zurück, um seine Füße zu streicheln....Wenn ich Mutter an der Tür höre, decke ich Vaters Füße wieder zu. [LA, 89]

Although, at no stage, does there ever develop an intimate bond between mother and daughter, neither before nor after the father's death, there is however one incident, in which the mother openly takes her daughter's side to protest against the father's decision to take the family dog with him on hunting trips [MSD, 44]. But in general, when the issue concerns her daughter, the mother is much less compassionate, even in times of personal crisis, as both the abortion and the divorce incidents in Wie kommt das Salz ins Meer reveal. Instead of supporting her daughter, she supports Rolf and when the daughter mentions the idea of divorce, she thinks only of protecting her husband. As his spokesperson, the mother warns her daughter of the ill-effects such a scandal would have upon the father's social standing, thus upholding the traditional view, that to destroy a father's public image is nothing short of sacriligeous:


By suggesting the daughter have a baby to distract her from her marital problems, she again reinforces the traditional belief, that motherhood makes a woman complete, without however taking into consideration that she herself has
failed to provide her daughter with a positive mother-image. This reluctance to establish a bond with her daughter persists even after the father's death and the awkwardness of their personal interaction comes to light in the following telephone conversation:

Geht es dir gut, fragt Mutter am Telefon und lacht verlegen: Wir haben schon so lange nichts von dir gehört! Ich mache mir Sorgen um dich, sagt sie und lacht verlegen. Weil du so viel allein bist. Und lacht verlegen. [LA, 29]

However, a significant change does occur in the mother herself during her husband's illness and upon his death. She gains in strength as her husband's diminishes: ("sie ist jetzt stark. Wie in doppelter Größe" [LA, 99]) and establishes her assertiveness when he loses his:


It so appears that the mother emancipates herself on a very private level towards the end of her husband's life and upon his death, although undoubtedly her conditioning still is a major handicap, in view of the extent, to which she emancipates herself. She takes control of matters, as she used to do during the father's absence and deteriorating state and becomes more decisive, even allowing herself certain luxuries she did not dare contemplate throughout her married years, as redecorating the house according to her own taste [LA, 13]. But there is no radical change of consciousness or lifestyle, nor does she ever cast aside the barriers between others and herself, not even in the case of her own daughters. Thus, the hierarchy remains, only now, the mother has taken on the role of surrogate father, still conforming to patriarchal standards.
4.5.3. ELFRIEDE JELINEK'S MOTHERS IN

*DIE KLAIVERSPIELERIN* AND *LUST*

Jelinek's mothers are confined to the traditional image of motherhood and behave towards their children in accordance with their position within the family hierarchy. This depends both upon the presence or absence of a father and the sex of the child. This pattern is already visible in her earlier works, when the children, particularly teenage children, play a central role. In *Die Liebhaberinnen*, Paula is treated differently to Brigitte who in turn is treated like Gerda in *Michael. Ein Jugendbuch für die Infantilgesellschaft* because in Paula's case a father is present, whilst in Brigitte's and Gerda's, he is not. Paula is abused by both her parents and her brothers, depending upon who confronts her first. Brigitte and Gerda are treated like consumer goods, with the mother, in each case, promoting her wares. Michael, Erich and Heinz are given special treatment by both their mothers and all the women in their lives, whom they, in turn, treat like inferiors.

In *Die Klavierspielerin* and *Lust*, the mother figures play a central role and in each case, their relationship to their child changes according to the child's sex and the presence or absence of a father. In *Lust*, the child is a boy and the father is present and both mother and son are reduced to victims of the father and the mother reduced once more to the victim of her son, because he is a boy. In *Die Klavierspielerin*, the child is a daughter and the father is absent, and the mother, having the power within the home, takes on the role of surrogate father, thus disclosing the degree to which she has internalised patriarchal norms.

In accordance with the different power relations between mother and child, so too differs the nature of violence. In *Die Klavierspielerin*, the mother inflicts severe physical and psychological harm upon her daughter, who is powerless and her attempted retaliation ineffectual, whilst in *Lust* the mother is victim of her husband's and her son's abuse until the very end, when she takes her son's life. In
both cases, Jelinek, in her role as narrator, exposes the delepidating effect of patriarchal power upon its victims, who are, in each case, those of a lower status, due to their age and sex.

The mother-daughter relationship in *Die Klavierspielerin* reflects what Simone de Beauvoir says in her book *The Second Sex* about mother-daughter relationships, when she postulates, that a mother’s psychologically conditioned and socially motivated dual-identity of tyrant and sufferer, of victim and oppressor, linked to both an extreme mutual dependance and a powerful drive to the merging of egos, represents the most disquieting aspect of the mother-daughter relationship and the most crippling confinement for both parties involved (1). This indeed is the case in this text. The mother’s domination over her daughter helps her to establish her autonomy, as she reduces her victim to an object or instrument of her will, in reflection of her subordinate position politically, socially and economically.

Moreover, after the mother’s initial aspirations of transcending her powerlessness and acquiring a status through her daughter’s talent as a musician (2) are not realised, since the daughter fails her crucial examination and obtains only the status of professorship at the Conservatorium in Vienna, the mother’s hold over Erika is even tighter, since her elevation into the middle-class now depends entirely upon controlling Erika’s income and ensuring that she does not abscond. In that light, the relationship between maternal love and the political reality of one’s economical plight, is cleverly exposed, strategically destroying the traditional concept of motherhood, as a self-sacrificial act on behalf of the mother. Instead, Jelinek satirises the idea and escalates the mother’s power by undermining the Christian projection of the 'immaculate conception' and allowing the omnipotent mother Kohut take on both roles:

Das Kind ist der Abgott seiner Mutter, welche dem Kind dafür nur geringe Gebühr abverlangt: sein Leben. [KS, 28]
Thus, Erika is formed, not in the image of God, but in the image of her creator-mother, who moulds her to her own ends:

Als sie dann den aus ihrem Leib hervorschließenden Lehmklumpen betrachtete, ging sie sofort daran, ohne Rücksicht, ihn zurechtzuhauen, um Reinheit und Feinheit zu erhalten. Dort ein Stück weg, und dort auch noch. [KS, 25]

From Erika's earliest childhood years, the mother keeps her under a tight reign and closes off every possible avenue, that might entice her into deviating from her predestined goal. Erika is forbidden social interaction, particularly with boys, first as a child, then as an adult and, on the rare occasions, when contact with others is unavoidable, the mother either engages spies to keep an eye on her daughter, rewarding them with home-made cake [KS, 44] or subjects her daughter to lengthy interrogations. The mother's sole territory lies within her four walls and the absence of a father fortifies her power. However, her frustration with regard to her impotence in world outside, where chaos and vice reign, becomes real each time her daughter ventures into it, and, to exert her power on home grounds, she reinforces her authority each evening upon her daughter's return:

... da steht schon die Mama groß davor und stellt Erika zur Rede an die Wand. Inquisitor und Erschießungskommando in einer Person, in Staat und Familie einstimmig als Mutter anerkannt. [KS, 7]

The mother's clever manipulation of her daughter reveals itself in every aspect of their life together. She has absolute control over her daughter's finances and demands an account for every unplanned spending:

Die Mutter, die nur eine winzige Rente hat, bestimmt, was Erika bezahlt...Die notenerfüllte Aktentasche wird ihr nun entrissen, und gleich schaut der Mutter die bittere Antwort auf alle Fragen daraus entgegen. Vier Bände Beethovensonaten teilen sich indigniert den kargen Raum mit einem neuen Kleid, dem man anseht, daß es eben erst gekauft worden ist ...Die Mutter wütet sogleich gegen das Gewand. Das Kleidergeld war für die Sparkasse bestimmt! [KS, 7-9]
Erika's mother also succeeds in alienating her daughter from the outside world to such a degree, that the daughter remains infantile in her dealings with people and situations and this in turn, gives the mother the upper-hand once again, as she can ensure Erika's dependancy upon her on an emotional level as well:

Die Mutter klopft die Mitglieder der Familie mit einem Hämmerchen ab und sondert sie einen nach dem anderen aus. Sie sortiert und lehnt ab. Sie prüft und verwirft. Es können auf diese Weise keine Parasiten entstehen, die dauernd etwas haben möchten, das man behalten will. Wir bleiben ganz unter uns, nicht wahr, Erika, wir brauchen niemanden. [KS, 20]

The mother's control extends to the bedroom and into the bed, which they share after the father's forced resignation:

Nach vielen harten Ehejahren erst kam Erika damals auf die Welt. Sofort gab der Vater den Stab an seine Tochter weiter und trat ab. Erika trat auf, der Vater trat ab...Jetzt wird endlich geschlafen! So verlangt es die Mutter vom Ehebett her. [KS, 7; 16]

This again secures the mother's power with regard over Erika's nightly activities, not only in view of unwanted intruders: "Sie bedroht das Kind mit Erschlagen, sobald es mit einem Mann ersichtet werden sollte" [KS, 104], but also in view of Erika intrusion into herself [KS, 54]. Despite the daughter's attempts to establish some kind of autonomy, the mother invariably makes the final decision [KS, 10], because she has maintained her hold over every avenue of her daughter's existence.

In Lust, Gerti and her son are under the husband's supreme rulership. Although she is not in favour of violence, she does not have the power to protect her child, when he is being abused by the father and in turn, she also does nothing when she is being abuse by her son. Although in this text, the mother-child relationship plays a subordinate role to the husband-wife relationship, one can
nevertheless ascertain the degree of violence and injustice inflicted on Gerti as the mother, as well as the father's and his son's oppressive behaviour to her as their servant:

Der Vater möchte endlich den Stoff von seiner Frau wegziehen und ihre Hügel schwungvoll hinunterrennen, aber nein, das Kind durchdringt wie ein Feiertag den Raum, sein Horn durchtont die Wohnung, in der alles zur Liebe einlädt ....Der Vater wirft in der Küche ein paar Tabletten in den Saft seines Sohnes, um diesen ewig Diensthabenden einmal zum Schweigen zu bringen. [LU, 228-9].

Although Gerti resents the role model her husband offers her son, she is powerless to prevent it:

Wie wird dieses Kind erst aufgeizen, wenn es, nach Papas Vorbild, im Reisepaß ein Mann und Vater geworden ist! Auf das lästige Gestillt werden kann sich das Kind gar nicht mehr besinnen. [LU, 38])

The infanticide can thus be viewed as a 'mercy killing'. Gerti not only wants to put an end to the cycle of violence, in which they both live and stop her son from becoming like his father [LU, 218], but also wants to spare her son from the many more years of physical and psychological abuse, to which he will be subjected, before he in turn will subject others to the power he has inherited:

4.5.4. BARBARA FRISCHMUTH'S ALTERNATIVE MOTHERS

Contrary to the above portrayal of mother-child relationships, Frischmuth proposes an egalitarian model between adult and child, in which both parties listen to and learn from each other and tolerate each other’s views for the common good. Yet, Frischmuth does not ignore the various problems, misunderstandings, frustrations and complications that arise from such a relationship, not only because of character differences, but mainly, because of the inability of Western society to accommodate it:

Was Sie und die Kinder sich wünschen, wird erst möglich sein, wenn die Bedingungen sich geändert haben. Wenn nicht alle abgedrängt werden, die nicht unmittelbar von Nutzen sind. [KLM, 193]

Amy Stern, Frischmuth's protagonist, is not engaged in a power struggle with her son and wants to establish a relationship based on tolerance, understanding and compromise. Although Kai's father visits them quite often and during these visits, devotes some of his time to both, most of the parenting is left to Amy, who, unlike mother Kohut, consciously evades the role of surrogate father. She disagrees with Klemens' priorities, in which both Kai and she play a subordinate role to his professional ambition and is often angered by his selfishness when it comes to giving up his time.

Warum empfindet Klemens Kai als Belastung, auch unseres Verhältnisses?.. Warum gelingt es ihm nicht, Kai als Unterhaltung zu sehen? Es muß an seinen Erwartungen liegen, an dem, was er unter Unterhaltung versteht... Wenn aber zum Beispiel Klemens nicht gezwungen wäre, ständig auf Bravour zu machen, wenn man es ihm schon in der Schule beigebracht hätte, daß man aus seinem Leben auch noch etwas anderes als eine Karriere machen kann oder daß man auch wer sein kann, ohne daß man weiß Gott wer hat werden müßten. Dann würden wir vielleicht wirklich miteinander leben können, er und ich und Kai. [KLM, 102; 104].

Amy does not blame Klemens' mother, Sophie Silber, for having failed in her son's upbringing, but the system, in which he has been brought up [KLM, 57]. Due to his education and upbringing in a foster home, Klemens is
uncompromisingly traditional in his attitude towards Amy and Kai, despite the fact that his biological mother is so untraditional in both her lifestyle and her role as mother. Like Sophie Silber, Amy also decides to remain single and lead an unconventional life and Klemens is jealous of the bond between his mother and the mother of his son. Amy realises that life with Klemens means having to give up her independance and renounce her ideals. Thus, she is in a sense relieved when Klemens moves to another town, although she is at the same time hurt by the way he has chosen to do it and deeply regrets the failure of their relationship. [KLM, 196-197].

In turn, Amy wants an open relationship with Kai, her son, and evades the traditional parent-child role model. Instead of excercising her power as a parent and demanding subservience from him, Amy wants to be able to relate to her son and view matters also from his perspective:

Ich versuche, Kais Leben zu erfassen, indem ich es nach seinen spärlichen Angaben für mich erfinde. [KLM, 64]

Similarly, Amy encourages Kai to do the same, but also realises that in many instances, he is still too young to view matters from an adult's perspective:

Dem ist aber eine Grenze gesetzt, die anzuerkennen Kai schwerfällt. [KLM, 63].

So indeed, friction does occur between mother and son, the essence of which revolves around the same basic factors. The first is time-restriction. As a single, working mother, Amy depends upon her writing to make a living and Kai, who is only five years old, is quite demanding. Kai often exhausts his mother's patience, which in turn creates tensions between them. Kai's lack of understanding of his mother's need to work often leads to open conflict and disruptive outburts [KLM, 98; 99; 105; 106; 144], with which he hopes to capture his mother's attention and it
is up to Amy to reestablish harmony and find an activity to keep her son occupied for a longer period of time.

Yet, not only Kai, but also Amy must learn to deal with this problem, if she and Kai are to remain good friends:


Amy must organise her time, so that she can cater for both her own and her son's needs and train herself to function efficiently in the hours available to her, in accordance with each particular task. This compact and stressful existence leads to the occasional regret, for having been burdened with the responsibility of bringing up a child on her own, making Amy equally doubtful about being able to maintain a good relationship under such conditions:

Ich werde versuchen zu verdrängen, wie lästig mir das alles am Morgen war, wie sehr ich mich zurückhalten mußte, um nicht in nackte Gewalt zu verfallen, und wie angenehm es mir dann plötzlich war, allein zu sein. An manchen Tagen aber läßt sich nichts verdrängen und unser gemeinsames Leben erscheint mir so aufreibend, daß ich mich frage, wie wir die guten Gefühle füreinander retten sollten. [KLM, 147].

Amy realises, that one of the main reasons why she feels so stressed at times, is because she, as a mother of a small child who works at home, is isolated from society because of her choice to work at home, in order to look after Kai:

Warum sieht man Kinder so sehr als Privatbesitz an, daß man die Verantwortung für ihr Wohlergehen mit aller Gewalt ein bis zwei Menschen zuteilt, die auch noch arbeiten sollen? Warum fühlen sich nicht alle Erwachsene mit allen Kindern verwandt?...Warum halten sie sich so total heraus, wo sie doch wissen, daß sie später einmal auf die heutigen Kinder angewiesen sind? Und warum läßt man die, die dennoch Kinder haben, so allein? Wenn es eine neue Moral gäbe, müßte ihr das echte Interesse an Kindern zugrunde liegen. [KLM, 67]
Her isolation extends to social interaction with previous girlfriends, none of whom are mothers of small children and, as a result, have little contact with Amy since Kai's birth:

Aber wie würden sie sich zu Kai verhalten? Würden sie sich nicht auch lieber mit mir unterhalten wollen und Kai als störend empfinden? ... Es muß doch irgendeine Möglichkeit geben, diesem schrecklichen Abgeschnittensein zu entgehen, in das man gedrängt wird, sich selber drängt, wenn man mehrere Dinge unter einem Hut bringen will. Es muß doch eine Möglichkeit geben, mit Menschen zusammenzuleben, ohne sich ganz zur Verfügung stellen zu müssen. Warum sind Kai und ich von so vielem ausgeschlossen, nur weil alle Welt glauben will, das müsse so sein? [KLM, 104].

The solution to the above isolation is communal sharing of children and of responsibilities, as it exists in other cultures, the model given here is that of the Canadian Cree Indians:

Die Indianer haben es ganz schön gut, sagt Kai, nachdem wir uns im Fernsehen einen Film über die kanadischen Cree-Indianer angeschaut haben. Da sitzen sie alle, die Männer, die Frauen und die Kinder, im Kreis und essen. So wie die Leute dreinschauen, fühlt sich keiner überlastet oder belastigt, weil die Kinder Tag und Nacht dabei sind. Und während der Großvater an einem Ruder schnitzt, schnipselt auch der Enkel mit seinem Taschenfeile an einem Stück Holz herum. [KLM, 148].

Amy offers this type of communal lifestyle to her son. Since she is not concerned, that Kai's role models epitomise Austrian middle-class masculinity and refuses to impose such restricting roles upon her son, she encourages Kai's afternoon outings to the city park with his babysitter Rosa, her Turkish friend, Pembe and Pembe's two younger brothers, where he mixes freely with people from different classes, cultures and sexes and promotes the relationship between Kai and Rosa, who is, at least during that time, her replacement (2):

... und die Art, wie er Rosas Hand hielt und zu ihr aufschaut, zeigte deutlich, daß er sie, zumindest in diesem Augenblick, als Ersatz für mich akzeptierte. [KLM, 14]
Rosa, in turn, understands certain things about Kai, which Amy does not, such as the reason why Kai likes to dress in girls' clothes, because Amy had wished for a girl, while Amy is puzzled by this:

Auch hatten sie Kai ein Kleid angezogen, ich weiß auch nicht warum. [KLM, 13]

Indeed, there are times when Kai appears like a stranger to Amy, having developed certain character traits, to which Amy cannot relate, but nevertheless understands, as she realises that each group of interacting individuals creates their own law and code of behaviour:

Kai wächst und ist immer anders, und ich bin jedesmal überrascht, wie die Stunden außer Haus ihn verändert haben. Einmal bin ich heimlich hinterhergegangen, als er mit Rosa, Pembe und deren Brüdern zum Stadtpark ging. Und wie ich ihnen so aus einiger Entfernung mit den Blicken folgte, war mein Kind mir mit einemmal so fremd, daß mir die Tränen aufstiegen... Aber selbst von dem Kleid abgesehen, war er zum Mitglied einer Gruppe geworden, einer Gruppe von Gassenkindern, die eigenen Gesetzen gehorchte. [KLM, 13]

This very issue: "Ich würde sagen alle Menschen sind aller Kinder Eltern" [KLM, 68]) is again raised in Die Ferienfamilie, when Nora explains to Lajosch why she agreed to take along two other children, besides her own, on this family holiday [FF, 103-108]:

Meine Schwester und ich sind in der Verwandtschaft herumliefen worden, und ich konnte sehr gut unterscheiden zwischen den Leuten, die sich auf uns einließen und jenen, die irgendeiner Pflicht nachkamen. Und daß wir überlebt haben, das verdanken wir nur denen, die mit ihrer Zuneigung nicht ausgehalten haben. Die nicht lange gefragt haben, ob wir eigene oder hergebrachte Kinder, sondern für die wir eben einfach Kinder waren, Kinder, die es gab und für die gesorgt werden mußte, mit leiblichen und seelischen Kräften....ich weiß, daß gewisse Dinge nötig sind und daß das Leben aus Wechselwirkungen besteht...Das ist eine Frage der Umverteilung...Du kannst mir ja helfen, dann ist es gleich nicht mehr so mühsam. [FF, 104, 108]

Nora empathises with Fenek and Laia, because they, too, are being handed from one person to another. Although Lajosch's initial reaction is also to consider
children to be a burden, he accepts Nora's view and is willing to share the responsibilities with her, as are the children themselves, all of whom enjoy a good relationship with Nora and each other.

The special bond that can develop between adult and child and which has indeed developed between Nora and the children, Amy, Rosa and Pembe, Herwater and the children and which Lajosch is willing to develop with Nora's 'Ferienfamilie' is undoubtedly an important factor in the development of a child's struggle for autonomy and identity, when presented with a variety of role models from which to choose, as was the case in the extended family. The mother-child bond however is the primary bond, as Fenek's reaction to the news of his mother's arrival [FF, 132], Laia's reaction to her mother's prolonged silence [FF, 86-7] and Amy's evaluation of her own relationship to Kai substantiate:

Zwischen ihm und mir ist die Berührung einer Sprache, die wir von Geburt an, von seiner Geburt an, gelernt haben und deren wir uns mit Selbstverständlichkeit bedienen. [KLM, 66]
4.6.1. WOMEN AS DAUGHTERS

Millett's view that sex is a status category with political implications, the essence of which is power (1), is reflected in the relations within the family, in which wives and daughters belong to the same class as their husbands and fathers, but have a lower status and are therefore under their power. Whilst boys grow up to be men and gain power because of their sex, girls remain powerless throughout life:

Due to the social, economic and psychological position of inferiority of the western middle-class housewife, daughters fail to develop mature dependance and self-respect. The mother's self is mirrored in the daughter and the mother is internalised and remains part of the daughter, despite all attempts at external separation and autonomy...As long as the desires of the male hegemony are considered the standard of acceptability, and as long as mothers train their daughters to live up to the standard, the pervasive inequalities of our gender roles will not disappear. (2)

Girls are thus both socially and psychologically conditioned to be submissive, obedient, selfless and chaste and are taught from the earliest stages of their lives, that for them, femininity is a passive subordination to male superiority, in order to maintain hierarchical relationships amongst the sexes. Women, having internalised such inequitable sex-role expectations during their formative years, significantly contribute towards the reinforcement of such ideals in their daughters when they become mothers and educators:

The values of obedience and good behaviour, as propagated by the dominant culture are fostered and promoted by the mother, only to continue the pattern of subordination.... This largely unconscious maternal collaboration with the existing structure results in female self-hate, the consequences of the experiences of inferiority and social impotence. (3)

To some degree, this theme has been dealt with in the section on Frischmuth's Klosterschule and in that on the role of women as mothers. The following analysis will examine the consequences of such conditioning upon adult daughters, whose
consent to adult femininity, is, "teleologically determined, at its best, the result of a long, conflicted and discontinuous developmental course marked by a series of costly repressions." (4)

Because mothers carry the primary responsibility for the rearing of children, girls develop different conceptions of the self and its relational needs and capacities to boys. A girl's sense of self is developed in relation to someone of the same sex and her process of separation from the person with whom she is originally bonded (the mother) does not require such well-defined ego-boundaries as boys (in order to become that which is other than the mother), but retains a greater sense of connection and continuity. Girls therefore do not rely upon autonomy of the self as a pre-requisite to relationships, but have a greater tendency to define themselves and find their identity through others. For a daughter to develop into a healthy and autonomous sexual adult, she must successfully surmount first the pre-oedipal and then the oedipal stages of her sexual development (i.e. transfer her attachment from the mother to the father - to the love of another man) and her inability to do so can lead to sexually pathological behaviour in later years (5).

The texts studied here highlight the adverse effects of the protagonists' unsuccessful struggle to free themselves from a parent they both love and hate with equal passion. Jelinek's heroine tries to free herself from her mother, Schwaiger's from her father. In Die Klavierspielerin, the daughter is subjected to severe physical and emotional harm, in Lange Abwesenheit, she is denied all physical and emotional warmth. Both daughters suffer as a result and are subjected to some kind of socio-psychological destiny, in which they are doomed to reproduce the same kinds of relationships with others (6). Both texts contain autobiographical elements, although Schwaiger's text, written in the first person, is much more explicitly so than Jelinek's, which is written in the third person (7). Both authors take a cynical look at parent-child relationships and their caustic, critical and bitterly...
humourous expository commentary is heavily loaded with tragic irony in its tone of presentation.

4.6.2. ELFRIEDE JELINEK'S DIE KLAVIERSPIELERIN

Jelinek creates a domestic environment, which consists of only a mother and a daughter. With no other influential figure in this family constellation, the situation is potentially optimal for the development of a good mother-daughter relationship. But this is not the case. Instead of establishing a bond based on friendship, equality and solidarity, the mother takes on the role of surrogate father, takes it to the extreme, and exercises absolute control over her now almost forty year old daughter. Her power extends over her daughter's social, financial and sexual life, squelching her every attempt at creating a healthy and autonomous self. Through the mother's role as surrogate phallic, Jelinek exposes the extremely adverse effects of the misuse of power within the patriarchal-capitalist social order, which, as mentioned earlier, begins in the home, is reinforced in society and culminates in the church. In that light, the conditioning the heroine of this text undergoes is poignantly similar to the conditioning the girls undergo in Frischmuth's Klosterschule, in each case the protagonists symbolically representing victims of a system, which does not tolerate autonomy of the self.

Since the daughter's only role model is her mother, she becomes hopelessly caught in the cycle of transmitted identity, which results in an inability to understand love and sensual pleasure in any form other than what she experiences at home. As a result of the sado-masochistic power relations within this perverse mother and daughter union (which not only excludes a father, but a positive male role model in general), the daughter, Erika, displays a cruel and perverted sense of self and its relational needs to others. Erika's secret and hidden private life, filled with voyeurism and self-mutilation and her unconventional sexual interlude with
her piano student, Walter Klemmer, serve to illustrate her crippled personality and distorted notions of affection, in which her unsuccessful attempts at liberating her repressed sexuality manifest themselves in overt sexually pathological behaviour (1).

Sheltered from external influences, Erika remains infantile and emotionally and sexually impotent throughout her adult life and it is the means by which Erika attempts to escape that give insight into the internal and external constraints that ultimately hinder her from creating a mature, adult self. In her role as musician, Erika scorns the theory of sublimating the eros for the sake of art (the concept in itself being self-contradictory, since art, in this case music, is primarily an appeal to the senses), but instead of experiencing sensual pleasure during her rare moments of intimacy with herself, in which she defiantly rejects the taboo of physical sensation, Erika remains fixed in her distorted and extremely negative self-image and is unable to create a healthy one:

Wenn kein Mensch zu Hause ist, schneidet sie sich absichtlich in ihr eigenes Fleisch... Sie setzt sich mit gespreizten Beinen vor die Vergrößerungsseite des Rasierspiegels und vollzieht einen Schnitt, der die Öffnung vergrößern soll, die als Tür in ihren Leib hininführt... Ihr Hobby ist das Schneiden am eigenen Körper. [KS, 110]

Erika's identity crisis and subsequent invasion into her own body can be attributed to the ill-effects of the phallic intrusion into her female self, physically and emotionally. Her mother, being biologically female but symbolically male (2) and her upbringing, which trains her to take on the role of breadwinner but also forces her to comply with her traditional role as the obedient daughter contribute towards this emotional dilemma. Erika's self-mutilation can be understood as an attempt to destroy the mother within her, and as such, her own mother, the purpose of masochism being to destroy the superego or the sadist, i.e. the mother in her role as surrogate phallic, who represents the 'dominant' culture and its systematic
repression of female sexuality and self-expression (3). In that light, Erika's actions can be understood as an attempt to redeem Eve from her Christian interpretation of having perpetrated the ultimate sin and bequeathed evil onto mankind (4).

Although Erika displays sadistic traits when she emulates her mother (e.g. the manner in which she treats her students, her work environment being the only place, where she has the power to behave towards others as her mother behaves towards her at home [KS, 128, 141, 230]), she is predominantly a masochist, which is mirrored both in the extreme seriousness, with which she adheres to the spoken and written word and in her understanding of pain as a pre-requisite for pleasure (5). In order to resolve the conflict within her, Erika must either eliminate one of the two roles or reconcile them.

Erika's masochism reveals her underlying craving for autonomy, control and mastery. The masochist, even if purely on a temporal basis, excercises power over the sadist (6), as he/she is both executor and recipient in an act, over which he/she has control (hence the importance of a spoken or written contract), whilst the sadist is restricted to the role of executor. Masochism is therefore Erika's secret art, in which her powers of creativity peak and music is purely a means of excercising power over others in the limited avenues available to control. But since Erika does not experience pleasure as a result of the pain she inflicts upon others or herself, her powers of creativity remain suppressed:

Ihr Körper ist ein einziger großer Kühlschrank, in dem sich die Kunst gut hält.
[KS, 29].

Since, in Jelinek's view, a daughter's powers of creativity can be attributed to living with a domineering mother (7), Erika's self-mutilation can also be understood as an attempt to annihilate the artificially contrived and painstakingly drilled musician within her, which may (at least sub-consciously) be the reason for
her failing her crucial exam and, in doing so, rebelling against the system, represented by her mother. Thus, the humiliation Erika experiences upon failing the exam provides her with necessary pleasure at causing her mother pain.

Erika's other avenue of escapism is into the backstreets of Vienna, where she is a regular visitor of pornographic movies and peep shows, the role of voyeur again giving her the feeling of control over the sexual acts committed before her. As in Lust the theme of pornography also serves to highlight Jelinek's political stance. The victor-victim relation reflects the dominance-subordinance power relations in a patriarchal-capitalist society. The consumer's ignorance and infantilism serves to illustrate what capitalism nurtures in order to market its products. Davidson's account best describes Jelinek's perspective, the only difference being that Jelinek views both sexes as equally vulnerable:

The real ill effects of pornography are much more subtle. Pornography uses an extraordinarily powerful set of symbols to convey messages that are badly thought out or deliberately perverse because of the essentially economic motivation of the genre, its semilegitimate status, and the widespread dissemination of sexual misinformation of various sorts. Pornography represents a major stimulus in the lives of some men [and women], and although its negative effects are poorly known, it stretches credulity to believe it may not have a disruptive impact on the vulnerable - in particular on obsessive and immature men [and women]. The adolescent male [and female] may actually face less of a problem with pornography than the adult male [or female], since he is in transit between the fantasy world of pornography and what is to him the incomparably more thrilling one of real sex. The sheer strength of his [or her] sex drive will usually serve to bridge the gap with ease. (8)

In reference to the above, Erika is stagnant in the adolescent phase of sexual development, in which sexual fantasies play a significant role before evolving into active sexual encounters upon maturation. The watchful eye of her domineering mother (in her role as representative of patriarchal indoctrination), not only ensures that Erika remains infantile and ignorant, but also allows Erika little room to mature into a healthy sexual adult:

Erika hat keine Empfindungen und keine Gelegenheit, sich zu liebkosen. Die Mutter schläft im Nebenbett und achtet auf Eriks Hände. Diese Hände sollen üben,
The mother’s rigorous prevention of Erika’s any attempt to masturbate (a constraint normally imposed upon adolescent boys) coupled with Erika’s identification with her role as breadwinner (and subsequent hatred towards her ‘female’ self) results in the adoption of the ‘male gaze’ whilst watching others emulate sex at peep shows, at the movies or in the city park [KS, 54]. But because Erika is female, she is denied the gratification, that men usually have in the role of voyeur (8). In her role as masochist, Erika is similarly denied the gratification that masochists experience when inflicted with pain, because of her pseudo-empathy with her sadistic mother. Erika feels nothing when she is mutilating her private parts, although she is, in this act, the one in control:

When Walter Klemmer makes advances towards her, Erika is taken by surprise, since she is not used to being approached by men and thus deals with the situation in her habitual way, i.e. by viewing Klemmer as the other:
Erika's feelings for Klemmer however become real. Klemmer represents the means of escaping her mother and of re-enacting her suppressed sexual fantasies:

Erika liebt den jungen Mann und wartet auf Erlösung durch ihn. Sie gibt kein Anzeichen von Liebe von sich, damit sie nicht unterliegt. Erika möchte Schwäche zeigen, doch die Form ihrer Unterlegenheit selbst bestimmen. [KS, 207]

When Erika becomes jealous of one of her piano students, whose youth and beauty casts a shadow over her middle-aged and much less desirable person, posing a threat to her chances with Klemmer and takes revenge against her unsuspecting rival by placing broken glass into her coat pocket [KS, 209], she is not in the least remorseful, when her victim gashes her hand badly enough to require medical attention:

Dann reißt ein Aufschrei die Luft entzwei, und eine vollkommen zerschnittene, überblutete Hand wird aus einer Manteltasche herausgerissen...Das Mädchen muß sich hinsetzen, weil ihm Übel ist...Erika täuscht Übelkeit und Übelstimmung im engen Dunstkreis von Blut vor. [KS, 212-3]

This particular incident illustrates the inter-sexual rivalry inherent in women's conditioning when it comes to men. In Erika's case, she is again emulating her mother's behaviour towards her, who not only isolates her from potential rivals, but also punishes her for being young and attractive, by forbidding her to be just that. Thus, Erika punishes her rival for being younger and prettier than she is and for having the power to take Klemens from her, the incident in itself giving her the illusion of regaining the upper hand, as in the case of her mother in regard to her. Like Susi (in Jelinek's Die Liebhaberinnen), Erika's rival does not even regard Erika a threat and indeed, does not even suspect her as the culprit, the entire episode having taken her by surprise.
On Klemmer's part, the seduction of Erika is purely instrumental to his quest for power and status, although, in the beginning, the teacher-student element does have some appeal. Music for Klemmer is a means of climbing the social ladder and by winning over Erika, he hopes to triumph on both accounts. Klemmer's sporting feats, in which he conquers the most difficult elements of nature, serve to measure the degree of his aptitude in the conquering of Erika. Again, the choice of words reflect the traditional male perspective of heterosexual relations:


But their first sexual interlude in the student toilets gives Erika the upper hand, as she denudes Klemmer both literally and metaphorically and asserts her power as well as she sets the conditions for their future relationship:


Her success on this occasion leads Erika to believe to have everything under control [KS, 249]. She writes Klemmer a letter containing detailed and explicit guidelines to the sado-masochistic experiences she hopes to share with him. As mentioned earlier, from the perspective of the masochist, power lies in the other party's subordination to a situation, which he or she has created and which the other party is forced to comply with by virtue of an agreement. Thus, the physical act of bondage is subordinate to the bond created by the letter and the letter is the key to Erika's control (9):

The letter, however, becomes Erika's undoing and brings out the sadist in Klemmer, who recognises the position he is meant to take, which he, like Erika's mother, is not prepared to do. Thus, the revelation of Erika hidden sexual fantasies, which couple her relationship to her mother with her second-hand experience with sex in the backstreets of Vienna, not only loses her Klemmer's respect but also destroys her perhaps only chance at true love.

Upon reading the letter Klemmer leaves in disbelief and Erika, misinterpreting his reaction and becoming excited and full of expectations, attacks her mother in a sexual frenzy [KS, 292]. It is not until after Erika attempts to seduce Klemmer again in the conservatorium closet, but fails, that she realises Klemmer has lost interest in her. Erika drops all of her defenses. In her eagerness to please Klemmer and to adopt the subordinate position, Erika rushes towards him like an avalanche of love ("Als Liebeslawine rast sie auf ihn zu" [KS, 243]), thus yet again, as on the first encounter, totally reversing the traditionally passive role she is meant to take. This time, Erika incites impotence in Klemmer and consequently degrades him once more. In order to regain some form of self-esteem, Klemmer abuses Erika verbally and Erika, feeling guilty and a failure, returns home to punish herself (10):

Since the letter, Klemmer's infatuation with Erika has turned into repulsion. Embittered by the constant degradation he was subjected to in the classroom with regard to his limited musical talent and by the episode in the conservatorium closet, in which he failed to prove his manhood [KS, 300-310], Klemmer decides to take revenge and subjects Erika to an equally perverted power game, this time according to his rules:

Er sagt zu Erika: damit das gleich klar ist. Nichts Schlimmeres, als eine Frau, welche die Schöpfung neu schreiben will. [KS, 340]

Despite Erika's attempts to reach a mutual understanding on Klemmer's level, vowing to ignore the letter and establish a 'normal' relationship, Klemmer beats and rapes her in her apartment, with the mother listening helplessly at the door. Even during the rape, Erika still hopes for Klemmer to want her to love him: "Sie hoffte sehr, Klemmer wünscht, das sie ihn liebt" [KS, 342] and at the same time, hopes to feel something for him, thus merging the polarised sex-role expectations, with which she identifies, but again being denied the satisfaction of either one:


The ending is a paraphrase of Kafka's *Der Prozeß*. Erika pursues Klemmer with a knife the following day, but, instead of attacking him, reverts her anger onto herself and inflicts multiple stabwounds into her own body, taking the blame
entirely onto herself. She returns home to mother in total resignation, her last hope of escape being totally shattered and the conflict within her remaining unresolved.

4.6.3 BRIGITTE SCHWAIGER'S LANGE ABWESENHEIT

In this text Schwaiger's domestic environment reflects the traditional family setting, in which the father, as sole breadwinner, exercises absolute power, whilst the mother reinforces his rules. The text revolves around the effects of patriarchal authority on an adult daughter, who is attempting to create an autonomous self within a situation that is essentially misogynist. Moreover, the daughter's overt father fixation leads to a strong identification with his values and ethics, which are highly discriminatory and critical of others and which consequently obstruct her quest for self-realisation, even after she has left home.

In contrast to Erika's family situation, in which there is no father or father-figure and the protagonist remains fixed in the pre-oedipal phase, Schwaiger's heroine is entrapped in the oedipal phase, due to deprivation of paternal love, which in turn manifests itself in an inability to form healthy heterosexual relationships with other men, since the primary object of her desire remains to be her father (1):


The narrative consists of a series of flashbacks and inner monologues, whilst the protagonist is standing at her father's graveside shortly after his death. In non-sequential order, the protagonist recaptures her childhood and later experiences with her father and her past affair with Walter Birer, thus introducing all of the central characters in the opening paragraphs, the linkage being an associated thought process. The text itself is centered upon the protagonist's attempt to free
herself from her father's influence and to establish her own identity, while at the same time, it is also an attempt to become close to her father after his death so as to resolve the conflict within her in regard to their estranged relationship. With detached irony, the protagonist recollects her childhood and acknowledges the powerful influence her father has upon her, not only in terms of his authority at home, but also in terms of the value system he had instilled in her, which she continues to uphold despite various attempts to outgrow them. She recounts her family life, which reflects the classical family situation, in which the father is rarely present and when he is, wants to be left alone. As a result, it is the mother who takes on the traditional role of conditioning her daughters to be considerate, obedient, quiet and unobtrusive, reflecting the fascist elements in the typical German 'Gehorsamskultur' (2):

Das friedliche Familienleben. Mit dem Frieden, der darin besteht, daß die einen nicht sagen, wie hungrig sie sind, damit die anderen in Ruhe essen können. [LA, 26-27]

Just as the protagonist's love for her father is predominantly narcissistic and revolves almost entirely around her own needs and losses, so too her father views matters only from his perspective and makes no secret of his disappointment with his family, as it did not provide him with an heir, letting his daughter sense how superfluous she is, just as she makes him sense her longing for closeness:


The protagonist is not only jealous of her dead brother, who would have been given the father's love, had he survived [LA, 91], but also of her father's patients, for the attention they receive: "Ich wünsche mir Krankheiten, um von ihm berührt
zu werden. Seine Hände". [LA, 28] and most of all, of her sister's son, Berhard, towards whom the father openly displays affection, as if to replace the son he lost. The protagonist is bitter to find only Bernhard’s picture in her father’s wallet [LA, 115] and envies Bernhard for the privileges he enjoys, which she had been denied:

Ihn hat Vater in sein Bett geholt, er durfte mit Vater baden, von seinem Teller essen. Vater lehrte ihn seine Schuhbänder richtig einfädeln. [LA, 119]

The protagonist, however, blames neither the father nor least of all herself, but her mother, for their ailing relationship and an oedipal death-wish surfaces:

Ohne diese Frau, die meine Mutter ist, wäre er nicht der geworden, der er ist, denke ich. Ich bilde mir ein, ich hätte es nicht zugelassen, daß er mich und meine Töchter verkrüppelt. [LA, 72]

At the funeral, it is Bernhard's warmth the protagonist seeks, since he is the primary source, through whom she can come in touch with her father [LA, 119]. In turn, she herself could never touch her father: "Was willst du von mir, fragte Vater, wenn ich nur seine Hand wollte." [LA, 118]) and barely received more than a fleeting moment's attention and this, purely as a social front [LA, 9]. Her wish to be her father's "heimliche Geliebte" [LA, 10, 104] therefore remains suppressed until the father is too weak to push her away:

Ich halte seine Hand, lege mir seine Finger zurecht, die gute Vaterhand, Finger um Finger, damit ich mein Gesicht hineinschiegen kann, so nah und so lange wie im ganzen Leben niemals. Ich vergewaltige ihn zu Zärtlichkeit. [LA, 107]

The protagonist's longing for paternal affection initiates her search for a surrogate father upon leaving home, which results in an affair with Walter Birer, a man of similar age and intellect to the father:
Birer war ein gescheiter Mann. So wie mein Vater, wenn nicht gescheiter....Er wird mein Geliebter, mit ihm werde ich mich behaupten gegen Vater....Wenn Birer wüsste, wie ähnlich er oft meinem Vater ist. [LA, 37-38; 58])

By bedding an elderly Jewish lover, the protagonist not only wants to experience the paternal love she had been denied, but also wants to assert herself against her father, whose prejudice against Jews plays a prominent role in her upbringing. The flashbacks include the father joking about the mother's Jewish heritage for the obvious purpose of hurting her [LA, 26] and the lack of empathy he displays, when talking about the Holocaust. Not only does the father believe himself exempt from blame because of the brainwashing that had gone on, but he also suggests that the Jews were themselves somehow responsible for what had happened to them:


In light of the above, the father's professional diagnosis of Birer's short remaining lifespan, which ironically becomes reality not for Birer, but for himself, can therefore be interpreted as a deathwish on the father's part, not towards a patient, but towards a Jew. Similarly, on his deathbed, the father begrudges the Jewish 'Bundeskanzler' for being in good health, whilst he himself is bedridden.

In her affair with Birer, the protagonist hopes to resolve the two conflicting, but equally dynamic forces within her: the desire to be loved by her father and the desire to hurt him for not loving her and wishes she were assertive enough to confront him with these feelings:

Ich möchte mir vor meinem Vater die Kleider ausziehen, mich nackt vor ihn hinstellen: Schau mich an, ich bin eine Frau, ich bin nicht du! Was haben deine Gedanken in meinem Kopf verloren? ...Ich will nicht Deine Tochter sein! Von Birer will ich es wissen, alles, was es zu den Juden zu sagen gibt, von ihm nicht von Dir!
Ich möchte meinen Kopf retten, Nazidrecksau! Dieses Wort habe ich von Birer gelernt. Er sagt es mindestens so oft, wie du Saujud sagst. [LA, 55, 51]

By recreating the father figure in Birer, Schwaiger allows the sexual aspect in the protagonist's relationship to the father as well as the degree to which she has internalised her father's bias towards the Jews to become transparent. The protagonist not only wants to be loved by Birer, she also wants to punish Birer in place of her father and on his behalf. As the protagonist's feelings towards Birer are as ambivalent as are those towards her father, she feels drawn to him on the one level, in his role as surrogate father and redeemer: "Mein Kind, sagt er, wenn er mich umarmt, und ich denke, wenn Vater uns sehen könnte, jetzt, wie wir den Kampf hinter uns gebracht haben" [LA, 66], whilst on the other, she resents him for not being her father, but an old Jew:


Indeed, the stereotype of the Jew, as projected by her father, has been internalised by the daughter to the extent that she cannot escape looking at Birer through her father's eyes and has difficulty seeing him as an individual. As a result, Birer becomes the target for her bottled up aggression:

Juden gehen wirklich leicht gebückt, ich sehe es. [LA, 40]
Daß man Juden operiert, dachte ich. Daß man sich die Mühe macht! [LA, 44]
Juden erkennt man an den langen Ohren und am schleimigen Lächeln. [LA, 45]
Judenlächeln, dachte ich, Judennase. Und der güte, jüdische Blick" [LA, 53]
Er verdeckt seinen Judengeruch mit Rasierwasser. [LA, 55]

The protagonist's antisemitic sentiments are heightened by the fact that, as in the case of her relationship with her father, she again falls victim to patriarchal behaviour patterns with Birer. Therefore, even though the two men represent
polarised ideologies, they are united on this level. As with her father, the protagonist also plays only a marginal role in Birer's life and, similarly, from their nature and the conditions of their relationship. Thus, the male-female power relations remain unchanged. Like her father, Birer maintains his distance and suggests the protagonist do the same: "Paß gut auf, Mädchen, ich bin keine Erfüllung und keine Antwort auf Deine Lebensfragen." [LA, 36]

Since the protagonist initially regards Birer as her redeemer, she accepts his authoritarian and distant manner as symptomatic of his role, believing that he is justifiably punishing for her prejudice against Jews and for being the daughter of a Nazi. However, when the protagonist gathers the courage to confess her reasons for being involved with him, Birer is unable to comprehend the extent of her dilemma. Thus, instead of freeing her from her guilt with his words: "Quäle dich nicht und merke dir, du bist nicht für deine Eltern verantwortlich" [LA, 47], he makes her feel all the more guilty and the protagonist's bitterness towards him increases:


The affair with Birer ends when the protagonist turns to him for emotional support after her father becomes terminally ill, but is turned away. She resents Birer: "Tote gehören ins Grab!" [LA, 78]) and since she is recounting the affair after it has ended and after she has freed herself from him, she has the necessary critical distance to evaluate the situation from both sides. Like an ageing child molester (hence the sugar cubes upon each visit [LA, 46]), due to her youth and her Nazi heritage, the protagonist concludes that Birer had exploited her physically and emotionally:
Also er hat mich ausgewählt, genommen, erzogen und abgerichtet. [LA, 65].

But the protagonist’s first step towards independence, in which she successfully frees herself from a relationship similar to that with her father is put to a halt by a renewed and stronger identification with her father. Not only does his attitude towards Jews become a reality as a result of her experiences with Birer: "Vater sagte, die Juden verdrehen alles so, daß es gut für sie ausgeht". [LA, 57], but also does his love of economising become a practical reality for her. Upon each hospital visit, the protagonist eats the remaining food on her father’s plate, in order not to waste purchased goods:

Iß noch mehr, sagt er, es ist noch so viel da....Muß ja alles bezahlt werden, auch wenn es für den, der bezahlt, tödlich ausgeht. So genau, wie Vater immer gerechnet hat, rechne ich jetzt aus, daß ich Essengeld spare, wenn ich Vater jeden Tag besuche. [LA, 75]

Ironically, the protagonist is closest to men, who are closest to death and during the last stages of her father’s illness, she feels closer to him than ever before, mainly because he is too weak to argue or to reject her. It is during this time that the protagonist’s resentments towards the mother resurface:

Mutter sagt, daß sie sich beide freuen über meinen Besuch. Sei still, denke ich, wer redet mit dir, was mischt du dich ein, warum nimmst du immer alles vorweg, was von meinem Vater zu mir kommen könnte? Mach dich nicht so wichtig! Ich bin seine Tochter. Dich hat er nur geheiratet. [LA, 71]

Her father resists death for as long as he can [LA, 85; 110]. However bedridden and helpless he becomes, he always lets his family feel his contempt for them [LA, 104]. He chooses to die alone [LA, 111] with the expression of surprise, but not reconciliation on his face [LA, 113], reinforcing the alienation between his daughter and himself. Although the protagonist is relieved by his death [LA, 112], after watching him deteriorate and suffer for so long, she resents being
excluded once again at a time, when he could have allowed her to come close to him:


Not only the protagonist, but the entire family, feel, that they can dare to love the father only after his death without fearing rejection:

Man kann ihm jetzt Liebe geben, ohne sich der Gefahr einer Abweisung auszusetzen. Tote können einem nicht mehr vorschreiben, wie sie geliebt werden wollen. [LA, 26]

Unlike the protagonist’s relationship with Birer, from whom she effectively severs her ties, the ambivalent feelings towards her father remain. On the one hand, the protagonist’s love and admiration for her father linger after his death and the solitude the protagonist experiences heightens, as she has no one to turn to for emotional support and compassion:


But on the other, the anger the protagonist experiences towards her father for being cold, distant and unapproachable intensifies:

Ein Vater, ein richtiger Vater, ist einer, den man nicht umarmen darf, den man nicht unterbrechen darf, wenn er spricht, dem man antworten muß, auch wenn er zum fünftenmal dasselbe fragt und es aussieht, als frage er zu fünftenmal, um sich zu vergewissern, ob die Töchter auch willig sind, stets zu antworten, ein Vater, dem
The protagonist's likeness to her father is again evident in the above quote, which resembles the sadistic comments he makes about her:

Wie das blöde Mensch schon wieder dasitzt mit offenem Mund... Wann ist das blöde Mensch gestern heimgekommen? Das blöde Mensch hat schon wieder ihre Brille kaputtgemacht. [LA, 97]

The extremely negative picture the protagonist portrays of her father after his death is her way of coming to terms with her grief (3). Not only does she want to come to terms with her loss, she also wants to make peace with her father and, as such, with herself. But his power is greater than she anticipated and the struggle within her continues:


Thus, the daughter remains the victim of her conditioning. Not only does she fail to free herself from patriarchal power, she also fails to free herself from her father's prejudice against Jews. Nevertheless, the protagonist's confrontation with the social mechanisms, which govern her psychological dependance and subsequent vulnerability to ideological manipulation makes the reader aware of the degree of conflict a woman experiences in her quest for identity and self-realisation in a misogynist world.
4.7. RADICAL ALTERNATIVE IMAGES: KRANKHEIT ODER MODERNE FRAUEN

The two heroines of Jelinek's stage play Krankheit oder Moderne Frauen project the most radical of all the alternative images of women analysed in this study and the most positive image of female solidarity that Jelinek has so far produced (1). Emily and Carmilla personify the anti-archetypes of the Hetaira/Amazon and the Mother/Medium, which, according to Jungian typology on female archetypes, cannot unite due to their polarised state (2), but which, in this play, is exactly what they do. In the union of Emily (temptress, professional and intellectual) and Carmilla (wife, mother and homemaker), Jelinek provides an antithesis to Jung's theory of the female principle, by strategically reversing the roles and deconstructing its original definition. Furthermore, in allowing her heroines to transcend the archetypes, in which they are supposedly entrapped, Jelinek directly challenges the theory that archetypes are a natural and not a cultural creation.

Whilst Emily and Carmilla, parodies of Emily Bronte and the vampire Carmilla, of Sheridan le Fanu's nineteenth century tale, epitomise the female principle in reverse and the 'Geschlechtskrankheitsträger' of apocalyptic prophecy, Heidkliff, a parody of Emily Bronte's Heathkliff of Wuthering Heights and Hundekoffer, a reference to Ernst Jandl's Die Humanisten (3) represent the male principle in the extreme. Therefore, as in Lust, the demarcation of history from nature is again a central theme. Heidkliff, Emily's fiancé, as dentist and gynaecologist and as such, specialist of both bodily orifices (4), represents man's transgression into the natural world by transferring the power to castrate and procreate from female (nature) to male (hi-tech) hands and Hundekoffer, Carmilla's husband, as tax consultant and father of six, represents man's transgression into the traditionally female domains of parenting (by discovering his paternity) and mediating social distress: "Ich heile und helfe. Ich zeuge auch." [KR, 19].

210
The setting appropriately reinforces the paradoxical analogue of the history/nature juxtaposition and the symbolism and the dialogue in the text reinforce the parody of the situation, with designated numbers and signals implying specific images and popular myths, slogans and clichés used out of context to juxtapose the farce. The subtext paraphrases modern intellectual thought at its high point and by abstracting and distorting the original meanings, Jelinek brings to light the extent to which contemporary society has devolved. The philosophy of enlightenment, with its ethical-political goal of eternal peace, the Hegelian dialectic of intellectual reasoning and the pervasive stereotypes, ideologies and myths of the eternal feminine (including Freudian to Lacanian psycho-analytical interpretations) are transformed into grotesque perversions (5).

In reflection of the classical Greek tragedy, which portrays woman as less moral than man, her will to power being naked and under the conduit of the irrational barbaric forces of nature, Jelinek allows her protagonists to reintroduce untransformed cruelty into female nature and by reversing the traditional ending - i.e. man's victory over the forces of nature, destroys the illusion society creates, in order to conceal the extent of its subordination to chthonian power (6). Similarly, the apocalyptic ending, which, in its understood form, is another "male formulation with a phallic peak" (7), is also reversed and there is no indication of a providential design climaxing in the revelation of a Second Coming (8).

Jelinek's play is futuristic, but her heroines stem from the past, hence Emily states: "Ich zum Beispiel komme aus einer langen Röhre hervor: der Vergangenheit" [KR, 42], and Carmilla epitomises the Victorian ideal of femininity, implying that there has been no significant change in view of women's images:

It is not until the two women meet and unite, that they can successfully rebel against their patriarchal definition and defy every rule determining their physical and intellectual being. The Lacanian concept of women as non-existant is challenged with a parody of the Cartesian 'cogito'. Hence, Carmilla, says: "Ich bin eine Dilettantin des Existierens. Ein Wunder, daß ich spreche. Ich bin restlos gar nichts." [KR, 15] and then: "Ich bin krank, daher bin ich." [KR, 45]. The concept of logical reasoning, which is at first parodied by both women: "Ich denke, daher bin ich. Ich trinke, daher geht es mir gut" [KR, 19] is, in the end, totally destroyed, as the two women become mute and the men (who, as 'new-age sensitive males' represent the Lacanian use of the term 'phallus' i.e. the symbolic order, which is the order of language and the power to generate meaning) converse in an absolutely incoherent manner, which is frequently interjected with severe barking attacks.

In the first Act, the right half of the stage represents Heidkliff's surgery, which is sterile and impartial, with bottled blood standing on the table, and the left half "eine wilde Heidelandschaft mit Felsblöcken (und) in der Ferne Hügel, Wasser etc" [Kr. 6]. The play on words Heidkliff and Heidelandschaft indicates history's (man's) intervention in the natural (female) world, just as the bottled blood and IVF test tubes indicate the female's suppressed presence in the male hi-tech world. The fact that Heidkliff enters from the left "keuchend und wolfsartig hechelnd angelaufen" [KR, 6], plays on the preditory instinct in man and that Emily enters the surgery with two stakes protruding from her body with blood dripping out of them, plays on women's traditional role as game. Moreover, the manner in which both characters enter the stage - Heidkliff, agitated and outspoken and Emily, silent and apparition-like - suggests the polarised roles the sexes are expected to play in society and the resultant impossibility of a mutual understanding (9).
By having Emily appear as dead, with blood dripping from the inserted stakes, but in fact be undead and yet not alive, Jelinek gives her heroine the power to overawe and mystify the clear and linear rationale, upon which modern civilisation is built and in which she is not confined (10). In her role of vampire, Jelinek rewrites Genesis and by giving Emily the power of the phallic (represented by her protruding eye teeth, which symbolise both physical and intellectual penetration (11)) puts the serpent back into Eve (12). Therefore, Emily, who also represents the female principle, which, by definition, neither lives nor dies but always reappears (13), is able to transgress the original definition (14) and liken herself to God:

Ich bin der Anfang und das Ende. Dazwischen komme ich auch noch öfter vor. [KR, 9].

By being able to transcend the concept of womanhood, Emily breaks down the barriers for Carmilla, who is entrapped in her traditional role. As the metaphorical representative of both the patriarchal definition of womanhood and of history itself, the confusion surrounding Emily's dual identity is mirrored in her words, which again, are inverted to destroy the original concept: "Natur bin ich, erinnere daher oft an Kunst." [KR, 8]. This is at once recognised by Carmilla: "Sie sind ja wie aus der Natur geknallt! Wie ich früher." [KR, 19], suggesting an impending solidarity between the two women.

The theme of woman's dual identity, i.e. representing 'ein Rätsel' [KR, 10] to man and as such threatening his quest for omniscience, but at the same time reflecting patriarchal definition is taken up in Heidkliff's lengthy soliloquy [KR, 10-11]:

In dieser Frau lese, wer will. Du bist mir ein Rätsel, Emily. Ordentlich bist du nicht, außer im Beruf...Du bist der siebte Himmel für den, der es aushält. Du hilfst und liebst. Dein Dienst ist öffentlich. Ich hätte gern einen Buchstaben oder eine
Zahl, um dich in kürzester Form zu benennen, ohne daß ich mich anstrenge...Ich möchte dich in einem Aquarium züchten...Da du wie alle bist, brauche ich eine andere nicht eigens aufzusuchen. [KR, 10]

To heighten the visual effect, Emily the nurse, disappears from stage to be replaced by a bat, which flutters around Heidkliff's head, but which Heidkliff does not at all apprehend, in effect suggesting his limited vision and, as such, that of the male principle. Thus, his soliloquy, in which he praises himself and his many feats and in which he places his values as "ein Maß" [KR, 7] for society, as they stem from a higher order: "Der Himmel befindet sich oben, in der Verlängerung meiner Körperform" [KR, 7], as a consequence of which he declares himself ruler over the environment (nature) and the disorganised masses (society), becomes a farce (15):


Whilst Heidkliff adheres to a sky-cult, Emily is earth-bound (hence cannot disappear into the world beyond) and represents the other: "Ich bin das andere, das es auch aber noch gibt" [KR, 9]), and as such that, what Heidkliff is both in awe of [KR, 8]) and considers himself destined to control:

Dein Geist, Emily, ist von meinem vollständig geschieden...Du bist mir wie eine Mehrheitserscheinung, widerwillig aufgezwungen...Ich gewähre dir die Erlaubnis zu einem oder zwei Worten. Ich bin von Bestand...Bitte verloben wir uns. Jetzt sind wir verlobt...Daher gilt, wo ich bin, bist auch du. [KR, 7]

The symbolic implication behind the entire scenario (Emily's appearance on stage with stakes and blood, Heidkliff's vision of her, Emily's inability to sit on the patient's chair), is that of Emily as the victim of a former witch hunt, which in turn, is substantiated in her words:
In her statement, "dieser Stuhl ist wie ein Dorf, das mich nicht duldet", both Stuhl and Dorf represent male artefacts of civilised patriarchal society which Heidkliff himself epitomises and which stands outside of nature:

Aus dir wächst etwas heraus, daß Mutter Natur unmöglich in dieser Form so gemeint haben kann. [KR, 7]

Jelinek also makes an obvious reference to Bachmann's Der Fall Franz. Requiem für Fanny Goldmann when Emily says: "Ich gehe jetzt mit der Stirn gegen den Stein einer Pyramide schlagen" [KR, 9], inferring a direct correlation between archeology, pre-patriarchal society and a woman's search for self (16), in relation to which Emily not long before states to Heidkliff: "Dort wo du nicht bist, dort ist das Glück". [KR, 8]

Heidkliff's fear that Emily will not be able to adjust to married life, because of her independence is therefore also a farce, because Emily, alone by the virtue of her being (a lesbian vampire) will never be able to adjust. Besides being Heidkliff's fiancée, Emily is also his assistant nurse and, in that role, plays muse to his profession: "Mein Hobby ist meine Verlobte Emily" [KR, 10], in which his professional secret: "die Trennung von Oben (Logos) und Unten (Eros)" [KR, 11], creates the void in male-female relations. In that light, Emily, the Schriftstellerin (17), can never become one of the world's great masters and disappear in her works, but is destined to remain in the realm of the "undead" as a result of patriarchal definition.

Jelinek parodies Emily's situation to that of Christ, both in her play on words and in her symbolic representation as the redeemer of humanity. By effeminising Christ in his role of suffering the injustices of mankind with psychoanalytic
references to female castration: "Ihr könnt, wenn ihr wollt, die Wundemale Christi aufweisen" [Kr, 52], Jelinek challenges both the Christian and the Pythagorean Principles, that associate women with the evil in nature. When Emily is about to raise Carmilla from the dead, she makes direct reference to the last supper:

Von dem ich esse, der wird ewig leben. [KR, 22]

Carmilla enters the surgery with her husband, Benno Hundekoffer, followed by their five children (adults wearing roller skates, uniformly scaled down in height) to give birth to her sixth child (the number six being symbolic of the Anti-Christ), but the surgery is empty. Heidkliff has gone for a swim in tiger-striped bathers, which infers him to represent the 'new-age sensitive male' attempting to rediscover his primeval roots. Strapped into the "Gynae-Stuhl" [KR, 14], Carmilla senses her forthcoming death and fears the fate which awaits her:


Carmilla also fears for the fate of her child, whom she senses will be different to the others, but who, ironically, in Hundekoffer's eyes, "entspricht genau der österreichischen Norm" [KR, 21]:


In Carmilla's eyes, she, like Emily, stands outside patriarchal definition, being neither the virgin Mary, nor the repentful Mary Magdalena and the last two
sentences: "Das sechste hättet ihr, du und Jesus, besser einer anderen anvertraut. Der Jungfrau Maria oder der Büsserin Magdalena" again refer to her this child as the Anti-Christ. Yet, without Emily’s help, she is still enveloped in her patriarchal definition and thus Hundekoffer is unable to interpret her in terms other than those in connection with her biology:

...schön bist du nicht...Dein Körper hat sich ausgedehnt, aber es ist schließlich für einen guten Zweck. [KR, 15]

He both envies Carmilla (since she, too, is for him "ein Rätsel" [KR, 14]) and wants to control her:


Carmilla responds, on the one end, in view of her role within the boundaries of patriarchal-capitalist definition: "Ich liefere Ware" [Kr, 16], whilst on another, she is attempting to transcend her boundaries:

Ich bin schließlich aus Beseeltem gemacht, nicht aus Staub. Ich bin aus einer Rippe gemacht. Spricht das nicht ein wenig für mich?...Wie lieb vom Jesusknaben! Das er so elegant an mir handelt. Er hat mich zwar als Grenze geschaffen, aber er läßt mich in seiner Güte doch manchmal hinüberschauen, über mich hinweg. [KR, 13-15]

which, in turn, incites anger and fear in Hundekoffer with regard to her wanting to become a part of history:

Was für eine Gattung Mensch bist du überhaupt? Du willst hier erwähnt sein, das sehe ich schon...Ihr ehrgeizigen Frauen! Woher kommt dieser Druck, den ihr auf eure Männer auszuüben versteht?...Jawohl, ich glaube jetzt auch: Dort drinnen sitzt die Wurzeln allen Übels. [KR, 15-16]
After Carmilla feigns compliance again and reinstates her position as his subordinate, elevating Hundekoffer to the position, in which he wants to be and in which he views himself, namely that of creator [KR, 16] and embodiment of the norm, the juxtaposition between God's creation (Natur) and man's creation (Kunst) effectively transforms the scenario into a contradiction in terms:


Hundekoffer's response, in which he confirms Carmilla's place as his subordinate and his of her superior, reinforces the paradox of the history/nature juxtaposition:


The chaotic atmosphere (thunder, lightning, the children causing destruction in the surgery and then in the natural environment) increases Benno's impatience to see his new creation, so he pulls the baby out from the birth canal, Carmilla dying as the result of his intervention. Emily and Heidkliff return. As a lesbian vampire, Emily defies her biological purpose: "Ich gebäre nicht, ich begehre dich." [Kr, 21], and in biting Carmilla and transforming her into her equal, liberates her from patriarchal definition. Meanwhile, Heidkliff and Hundekoffer, neither of whom are moved by Carmilla's death, hope to unravel 'das Rätsel Frau' by examining
Carmilla's inner organs, rearranging and discarding them in order to achieve their goal:

Diese Loch hier sieht so einfach aus und ist doch derart kompliziert, daß ein Mann wie ich jahrelang hart studieren mußte, um sich darin halbwegs zurechtzufinden. Wir müssen imstande sein, die Frau als Ganzheit zu sehen. [KR, 27-29]

Carmilla rises from the dead and upon hearing Heidkliff's words: "Gnädige Frau. Im besten Fall sind Sie Anlaß für einen Helden, Ihnen den Kopf abzuschneiden." [KR, 30], lets out the respective Medusan laugh and sacrifices the first of her children. Emily turns to Heidkliff to draw blood, but is warded off with rosary beads.

In the second act, Heidkliff's surgery is replaced by a bedroom, with coffins for beds, in which Emily and Carmilla lie. Carmilla, whose taste for aesthetics stems from the 1950s (hence, as housewife and mother, she makes her own tomato ketchup, like Doris Day [KR, 28], has chosen the decor to reflect that era. Emily is pursuing her primary passion of writing poetry on her portable typewriter. In a state of limbo between life and death, the two women experience solidarity and omnipotence, believed only possible for man and God. Vampirism is also a metaphorical representation of Christianity, as Carmilla herself proclaims:

Diese Christentum ist ein Vampir wie wir. Sogar noch mehr! Es lebt nicht und tot ist es auch nicht. [Kr, 38]

The men, in turn, experience fraternity (mirroring the latent homosexuality inherent in mateship, sportsmanship, etc.) and, although of a much less intimate nature than the bond between the two women, it is nevertheless stronger than the bond they had with the women in their traditional role:

Im Sprechen haben wir als Ehepaar uns nie zusammen in einen reinen Männerchor einschreiben können....Daher suchen wir immer nur uns. [KR, 20-22]
Due to their sudden omnipotence, outspokenness and self-discovery, the men protest, that the women now use their 'lips' to speak out, rather than contain them for their biological purpose as *Schamlippen* (18):

Ihr habt Lippen und nutzt sie wofür? Wozu? Zum Sprechen! Ich glaube: Dadurch, daß meine Frau jetzt Blut ißt, hat sie etwas Männliches bekommen, das mir nicht gefällt...Ich haße nun meine Frau Carmilla...Meine Emily! Sie gehorcht nicht mehr dem natürlichen Monatszyklus. Sie ist so gemein zu mir...Ich erneuere mich nicht. Ich werfe keine Haut ab. Ich gebe nichts her...Seid nicht wie ihr seid! Seid hygienisch. Folgt eurer Natur! Putzt! Putzt! Putzt! Putzt! [KR, 52]

The two women kill off Carmilla's remaining children, thus taking rather than giving and sustaining life, as their traditional roles as nurse and mother suggest and the men make one last frantic plea for them to revert to their original roles:


It is not the children's deaths, that upset the men, but the excessive blood, which in turn, reflects their fear of being devoured anew by the womb, from which they came and the mystery, which they could not unravel (19):


The element of blood plays a major role in the play. Jelinek not only recaptures the spirit of Ancient Greek Theatre, in which blood and bloodshed was an endemic feature, she also satirises its role in Christianity, in which the blood of Christ is holy, but the blood of women impure. By turning Emily into a female vampire,
who exists literally only from blood, into a Christ figure, the role of blood is being effectively restored to its original significance, namely that of being symbolic of women's power (20).

After having killed the children, the women attack the men, but cannot draw blood. The men have become as hollow as their words, which have devolved into 'Göbbels' language and inarticulate barking noises (21). Not only is it too late for women to reassert their power by challenging patriarchy's two thousand years of history: "Wir sind machtlos", [KR, 61], but the decline of patriarchy also appears inevitable and in fear and despair, Heidkliff and Hundekoffer pick up their firearms and threaten to kill the women, whom they blame for the chaos that has erupted (22).

In the final scene, Emily and Carmilla unite, but instead of doubling their power, they become not only mute, but also immobile, due to their size and their weight. Sitting amongst the filth and the stench of the now polluted and decaying 'Heidelandschaft' they gnaw the bones of their dead children. The environmentally conscious Heidkliff and Hundekoffer take matters into their hands and eliminate the bestial malformation of nature, thus reversing the theme in 'Beauty and the Beast', as they cannot find anything aesthetical or endearing in the 'Beast' before them. They indulge in an orgy of brutality and destruction, their meaningless outbursts reflecting the meaninglessness and absurdity of mankind's historical feats, since, inevitably, they also annihilate themselves.
FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER FOUR


3) C. Paglia, Sexual Personae. Art and Decadence from Nefertiti to Emily Dickinson, (Yale University Press, New Haven, 1990), p. 11: "Menstruation was once called 'the curse', a reference to the expulsion from the Garden, when woman was condemned to labour pains because of Eve's sin. Orthodox Jewish women still purify themselves from menstrual uncleanness in the 'mikveh', a ritual bath (Judaism being Christianity's parent sect). Women have borne the symbolic burden of man's imperfections, his grounding in nature. Menstrual blood is the stain, the birthmark of original sin, the filth that transcendental religion must wash from man."

4) P. Herminghouse, p. 106.

5) Ibid., p. 106

4.3.1. Demystifying Love and Marriage: Brigitte Schwaiger's Wie kommt as Salz ins Meer.

1) J. Vansant, Beyond the Horizon, Feminism and Post-War Austrian Women Writers, (Greenwood Press, USA, 1988), p. 73.

2) See S. Frieden, "The Left-Handed Compliment Perspectives and Stereotypes in Criticism." In: Beyond the Eternal Feminine, pp. 312-320.

3) "Mit einem der draußen stand, wollte ich nichts zu tun haben." [S. 115]

4) In Mein Spanisches Dorf, the protagonist's class-conscious attitude towards her, at that stage, best friend Anneli, surface in an argument between them and as such, the extent of the protagonist's conditioning already at a very early age, comes to light: "Ich bin eine Arzttochter, aber du bist ein Arbeiterkind! Ich bin eine Arbeitertochter, sagt die Anneli. Nein, eine Tochter ist man nur bei etwas Hohem, wie Arzt oder so, und du bist ein primitives Proletenmensch." [MSD. 38]. The protagonist is obviously aware of her position within the social hierarchy and of the gap between herself and Anneli, and expresses it on a level in accordance with her age. Although Schwaiger's 'I' enjoys playing with Anneli, the friendship does not survive, as each child is conditioned to socialise with children from their own class.

5) The role of typing is brought up several times in the text and mirrors the standard pre-requisite for the education of 'good' middle-class women.
6) For the author, the concept of 'light' plays a significant role in many of her works, reflecting the mode, mood and degree of intimacy between the protagonist and her partner(s). Although it is not dealt with in depth, the frequency with which it is mentioned alone indicates its relevance to the protagonist's state of mind.

7) As the story unfolds, Hilde is rather a paradox of what she represents and, as such, presents a grim view of the protagonist's future, if were she to take on these roles.

4.3.2. Women as Wares: Elfriede Jelinek's *Die Liebhaberinnen*.


4.3.3. Women as Objects: Elfriede Jelinek's *Lust*


3) Ibid, p. 128


7) E. Jelinek: "Der Kampf um die Gleichberechtigung der Frau kann und soll nicht von der Frau allein ausgetragen werden, sondern gemeinsam mit Männern". In: "Ich schreibe aus Haß auf die gesellschaftlichen Zustände." In *Brigitte in Österreich*, September 1973:

4.4.2. Alternative Partnerships - The Single Parent


2) Ibid., p. 175.

2) See *Literatur der Delphine*, in *Amy und die Metamorphose*, p. 245: "Dadurch daß ich andere Wesen beschreibe, bekomme ich eine andere Perspektive in der Sicht auf die Menschen". In *Kai und die Liebe zu den Modellen*, Herwater picks the card depicting the dolphin.
4.4.4. The Single Woman: Brigitte Schwaiger's Schönes Licht.

1) In Schönes Licht, the (now ex-) husband of Wie kommt das Salz ins Meer and old Jewish lover of Lange Abwesenheit appear under different names (Rolf is Rafael and Birer is Walter Slavik), whilst the protagonist, Christine Leitenmeier, like all I protagonists, suffers from depression throughout the text. The family constellation is the same, as are segments of the storyline, such as the protagonist's visits home (SL, 72-74), the illness and subsequent death of the father (SL, 137, 158), the protagonist's abortion (SL, 224), the protagonist's infatuation with a married man, in this case it being the husband of the protagonist's best friend (SL, 70), the parents' reaction to the divorce (SL, 11) and the protagonist's preoccupation with Jews (evident throughout all of Schwaiger's novels). Moreover, the novel Wie kommt das Salz ins Meer is directly referred to retitled Saure Trauben as is the subsequent effect of its huge success upon the protagonist's ex-husband, who, like Rolf in Mein Spanisches Dorf [MSD,142/3], is furious at having been exposed in such a negative light [SL, 156]. The heroine of this text also contemplates writing her next book about her father after his death [SL, 187], the father having also died of cancer.

2) Mentioned also in Mein spanisches Dorf, p. 130.

3) In the case of Bruno Pfeiffer (the Pfeiffers being a version of Albert and Hilde in Wie kommt das Salz ins Meer, Christine falls in love with him, but abstains from having an affair, because his wife, Dietlinde, is her best friend. In the case of the others, Christine does not consider sex to be a repayment for gratitude.

4.5.2. Debunking the Myth of the Middle-Class Mother


4.5.3. Elfriede Jelinek's Die Klavierspielerin and Lust.


4.5.4. Frischmuth's Alternative Mothers

1) This dilemma of children as a 'Privatbesitz' is brought up already at the beginning of the novel, when Amy witnesses children at the market place left to fend for themselves, since their are no facilities available to parents, who have to go to work and can't afford to pay someone to look after them: "Die armen Fratzen...auf einmal gibt es wieder Gassenkinder. Sie werden lachen, auch von den unsrigen finden sich welche dazu. Dem Reden nach kennt man sie kaum auseinander, gescheit sind die Kinder schon. Den ganzen Tag so ohne Aufsicht, da muessen sie was lernen, wenn sie nicht umkommen wollen....Aber wer soll sie denn holen?" [KLM, 6]

2) In the text, Frischmuth deals with issues, such as class-, gender- and social discrimination sympathetically and touches upon some of the cross-cultural problems guest workers experience in their host countries, due to negative stereotyping, without however involving herself with the political aspect to the extent, that, for example, Jelinek does in her works.

4.6.1. The Role of Women as Daughters

1) K. Millett, Sexual Politics, p. 35.

2) M.R. Knecht, "In the Name of Obedience, Reason and Fear: Mother-Daughter Relations", p. 359.

3) Ibid., p. 358


5) To explain the socio-psychological forces behind parent-child relations, Maria-Regina Kecht and Marianne Hirsch both adopt the Freudian theory regarding the importance of the early symbiotic (pre-oedipal) bond between mother and child and its special significance in the development of the female child with regard to its relationship to both sexes later on in life, as postulated by Freud in his later essays on female sexuality. According to this theory, a girl's primary attachment to her mother is a natural pre-dilection to the necessary libidinal transfer to the father as an object of love. Her progress from clitoral to vaginal sexuality is due to a girl's hetero-sexual awakening. M.Hirsch's The Mother/Daughter Plot, p. 100, mentions that recent feminist psychoanalytic theory postulates that the girl's affection shifts to her father because of her own heterosexual awakening. Then, even after a girl has adopted a normal female attitude in the Oedipal phase, her first object of desire will still remain to be her mother. Hence, the pre-oedipal bond between mother and daughter, which underlies and in some aspects even outweighs the formative power of the Oedipal phase, cannot be resolved by rejecting the mother, but by adding the father. Nevertheless, the almost totally repressive nature of the pre-oedipal stage of mother love (which Lacan later reformulates and clarifies- i.e. that the pre-oedipal stage coincides with the pre-verbal imagery stage which, in turn, gives way to the symbolic - and a girl's inability to surmount the pre-oedipal phase adequately often leads to a neurosis: "this phase of attachment to the mother is especially intimately
related to the aetiology of hysteria... in this dependance on the mother we have the germ of later paranoia in women". Quoted in M.R. Kecht, p. 372.

6) M.R. Kecht, "In the Name of Obedience, Reason and Fear: Mother-Daughter Relations", p. 358

7) See M.R Kecht, p. 361: "The narrative detachment from the undoubtedly freakish plot is a preferred strategy of Jelinek because - as she has stated in her interviews - in her artistic work she tries to come to terms with her personal obsession with sado-masochism".

4.6.2. Elfriede Jelinek's Die Klavierspielerin

1) See M.R. Kecht, "In the Name of Obedience, Reason and Fear," pp. 358-359. According to Kecht's Freudian analysis, the pre-oedipal cathexis to the mother leaves lasting fixations as the daughter's profoundly conflictual attitude towards her mother dominates her entire life. The additional factor of the absence of a father figure strengthens the symbiotic dyad of mother and daughter, which is never superseded, resulting in an extreme case of mother-daughter bondage. The mother's strong identification with the female child causes her to treat her daughter as an extension of herself and the adult daughter's infantile perception of the mother as a not separate other is due to the fact that the mother has no social role or function other than that of child-rearing. This blurred sense of ego boundaries creates a self defined through relations and eliminates true self-realisation, resulting in the daughter's internalisation of her mother's dual identity, which expresses itself when she emulates her, when the occasion permits this. Also see I. Philipson, "Narcissism and Mothering." In: Women's Studies Int. Forum., Vol. 5, No. 1, 1982, pp. 31-32. Philipson employs Kohut's study on the psychological repercussions of a daughter's failed process of individuation and separation from her mother, which leads to pathological behaviour in later years.

2) S. Berka, S., "Ein Gespräch mit Elfriede Jelinek", p. 143

3) Ibid., p. 143.

4) See C. Paglia, Sexual Personae, p. 11.

5) S. Berka, p. 141.

6) Ibid., p. 141.

7) Ibid., p. 151: "Bei einer starken Mutter bleibt wenigstens noch die Möglichkeit einer verlängerten Kindheit oder Kindlichkeit, die ja nicht unskativ ist. Die Kindheit ist ja im Grunde genommen, die kreativste Phase."

8) N. Davidson, The Failure of Feminism, pp. 112, 113.

9) S. Berka, p. 142.

10) Ibid., pp. 146-7: "In dem Zusammenhang habe ich an das gedacht, was Nietzsche in der 'Genealogie der Moral' geschrieben hat, wo er das, was gut und böse ist auf unser Schuldgefühl gegenüber den Vorfahren zurückführt,
die uns ihre Macht übertragen haben. Und dann sagt er, daß es früher einen Austausch zwischen Schuld und Strafe, also eine Möglichkeit der Abzahlung von Schuld gegeben habe. Insofern ist die Klavierlehrerin Erika, die ihr Leben lang das Gesetz ihrer Mutter erfüllt hat, gerade diejenige, die sich am schuldigsten fühlt."

4.6.3. Brigitte Schwaiger's *Lange Abwesenheit*

1) M.R. Kecht, "In the Name of Obedience, Reason and Fear: Mother-Daughter Relations*, p. 359. In reference to Freud, Kecht maintains, that in the case of optimal development, a daughter must sever her ties to her mother to transcend the pre-oedipal stage and enter the oedipal stage, in which she experiences a father-fixation, which in turn, must be superseded by the love of another man.

2) F. Eigler, "Trauerarbeit in Brigitte Schwaigers *Lange Abwesenheit* als konfliktreiche Suche nach einer weiblichen Identität," p. 28.

3) Ibid., p. 28.

4.7. Radical Alternatives: Krankheit oder Moderne Frauen

1) S. Berka, "Ein Gespräch mit Elfriede Jelinek", p. 128

2) D. Wehr, "Analytical Psychology Through a Feminist Lens", p. 115, p. 144. In *Jung and Feminism. Liberating Archetypes* (Beacon Press, N.Y., 1987). According to Jung, there are four archetypal forms of the feminine, or 'the female principle' (a term used refer to a woman's conscious way of being in the world). These four all-encompassing archetypal forms - Mother, Hetaira, Medium and Amazon are opposed to one another, and, according to Jungian typology, are universal. Every woman is to possess one superior, one or two functional and one inferior of these types, which, because of their fourfoldness, have the potential for conflict as well as for balance, although this opposition means, that one cannot be a Mother and a Hetaira simultaneously, no more than one can be a Medium and an Amazon at the same time.


4) "vagina dentata"; see C. Paglia, *Sexual Personae*, p. 13: "The North American Indian myth of the toothed vagina (vagina dentata) is a gruesomely direct transcription of female power and male fear. Metaphorically, every vagina has secret teeth, for the male exists as less than when he entered. For the male, every act of intercourse is a return to the mother and a capitulation to her. For men, sex is a struggle for identity. In sex, the male is consumed and released again by toothed power that bore him, the female dragon of nature".

5) M. Janz, p. 86.
6) C. Paglia, p. 7.

7) Ibid., p. 10

8) Ibid.: "No woman, I submit, could have coined such an idea, since it is a strategy of evasion of women's own cyclic nature, in which man dreads being caught. Evolutionary or apocalyptic history is a male wish list with a phallic peak."

Camille Paglia articulates the same view, when interviewed by Philip Adams on the BBC radio. Paglia says that the sexes will never get along and to believe that they may is sheer delusion.

10) C. Paglia, Sexual Personae, p. 9: "From the beginning of time, woman has seemed an uncanny being. Man honoured, but feared her. She was the black maw that had spat him forth and would devour him anew. Men, bonding together, invented culture as a defense against female nature."

11) S. Berka, p. 134, p. 135, p. 150. Paglia, p. 11: "Physical and spiritual castration is the danger every man runs in intercourse with a woman...Woman's latent vampirism is not a social aberration but a development of her maternal function...The male conspirator, the serpent, is not outside Eve but in her... At a very primitive level, all mothers are phallic."

12) C. Paglia, Sexual Personae, p. 11: "The serpent is not outside of Eve, but within her. She is the garden and the serpent."

13) S. Berka, p. 134.

14) Ibid., p. 150: "Der Vampir erschreckt ja auch die Geschlechtergrenzen, ist gleichzeitig Mann und Frau, der Vampir dringt phallisch ein, empfängt aber auch gleichzeitig."

15) The fascist elements in this concept are self-evident.

16) The archeological image Freud uses to describe the discovery of the pre-oedipal phase highlights its concealed and subversive power..."like the discovery, in another field, of the Minoan-Mycenean civilisation behind the civilisation of Greece" - i.e. matriarchal pre-history. In M. Hirsch, The Mother/Daughter Plot, p. 100


19) C. Paglia, ABC Radio Magazine Interview, p. 41.

20) See C. Paglia, Sexual Personae, p. 11.

21) M. Janz, p. 85.

The major objective of this study has been to examine the images of women, as presented in selected texts by Elfriede Jelinek, Barbara Frischmuth and Brigitte Schwaiger and to identify the extent to which the authors consider women to play a subordinate role in their public and private lives. The texts studied have shown that all three authors are concerned with the realities of women's exploitation and oppression in the private sphere and inherent in political and social institutions and generally accepted as the status quo.

Chapter One highlights that women's subjugation is a political and not a natural state of affairs and that women are largely unaware of their collaboration with patriarchal authority. With a heightened awareness to gender-related issues and the nature and extent of their discrimination women can co-operate and fight for equality in areas which continue to be still ignored.

Chapter Two identifies the role that literature can play to make women more aware of their situation. Women writers are becoming increasingly vociferous with regard to social injustice and, although the literary industry is still male-dominated, their views are slowly influencing the male-oriented academic world and many of their literary counterparts are voicing their approval and admiration. The image of the woman in the media is also under attack by contemporary feminists, such as Naomi Wolf and Susan Faludi, who publicise their views in books, magazines, radio and TV talkshows. Both issues infer a resurgence of feminist consciousness in the Nineties, which promises to change public opinion and attitude.
Chapter Three provides a brief overview of the stereotypes employed in the texts studied in Chapter Four and shows that, in the case of Jelinek and Schwaiger, the purpose of their character portrayals is to demythologise, dismantle and destroy traditional stereotypes and, in the case of Frischmuth, replace them with alternative models of partnership and co-operation.

Chapter Four examines the detrimental effects of gender stereotyping and the degree to which women either suffer or rebel. In the texts studied, not one of the authors places the heroine in a position of power or status, but in one, which reflects the reality of women's social immobility and the extent of external and internal constraints. No positive role model is provided of the wife, mother or daughter in the traditional family constellation, nor of the single, professional woman, who fears commitment and responsibility in her private life. In the case of the former, the authors' intention is to draw attention to the degree to which women are subordinated and exploited in these roles and to the injustices they experience as a result and in the second, to allow the reader to gain insight into the many obstacles, that hinder women from achieving self-realisation. There is however hope for change in the model of the mother in Frischmuth's alternative family constellation, as the heroines of these texts find a balance between their personal and their professional lives and a partner, who is willing to ignore the status quo and accept their unconventional lifestyle. However, Jelinek's radical texts suggest that the solution to gender inequality and discrimination does not lie in the rediscovery of women's power in pre-patriarchal history, as she does not believe that women can generate change on their own.
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The following primary texts are encoded for frequent reference in the body of this thesis.

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232
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