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INFANTICIDE, ILLEGITIMACY, AND ABORTION IN MODERN GERMAN LITERATURE

by

 LESLIE SHOUSE-LUXEM

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

APPROVED, THESIS COMMITTEE

Michael Winkler, Professor, Director
German and Slavic Studies

Robert Bledsoe, Assistant Professor
German and Slavic Studies

Helena Michie, Associate Professor
English

Houston, Texas

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ABSTRACT

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Leslie Shouse-Luxem

This dissertation examines the evolution and interaction of the public policy debate on reproductive issues in Germany and literary portrayals of crisis pregnancies in German literature and concentrates mainly on literature produced in the 20th century. Clusters of works thematicizing infanticide and abortion appear when public attention is focused on issues of morality and population concerns. The discussion about the rising number of infanticide cases during the late 18th century was accompanied by a cluster of works aligned with the Storm and Stress movement. These works explored injustices committed by the upper classes against the lower classes and evoked sympathy for the woman by depicting the woman's circumstances and motivations. During the Weimar Republic left-wing and left-leaning political parties called for a liberalization of the complete ban on abortions in place since 1871. The plays and novels that appeared in the 1920s and early 1930s explored the class-discriminatory effects of the law. Many depicted young, single, working women, an image that called up both positive and negative cultural connotations including a rational, efficient outlook on life as well as decadence and consumerism. The postwar works fall into three phases. The
early works of the 1950s and 1960s explore the issue within the context of war atrocities and question society's view of death and killing. In the mid-1970s, abortion was legalized in the East and liberalized somewhat in the West. A cluster of works appeared in the early 1980s that explores the longer-term effects of abortion on both men and women. Two novels by women written after reunification return to a more direct political message and explore how choice affects women's lives. These last two works represent the opposite viewpoint of the works from the 1920s and 1930s, but like their historical precursors, they are opposed to the prevailing legal status of abortion.
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### ABSTRACT

ii

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

iv

### CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1

- Early History
  
- Early German Laws
  
- Storm and Stress
  
  - The Mannheim Prize
  
  - Infanticide in Literature
  
  - The Fallen Woman
  
  - The Cad
  
  - The Parents
  
  - The Class Paradigm
  
  - Literary Strategy
  
- The 19th Century

27

### CHAPTER 2 THE WEIMAR REPUBLIC

34

- Historical Background
  
- The Authors and Their Politics
  
- *Neue Sachlichkeit* and Political Literature
  
- Typical Characteristics of Abortion-Seekers
  
  - Exceptions to the Rule
  
  - Absent Fathers-to-Be
  
  - Sex Education
  
  - The Medical Profession
  
  - Illegitimacy
  
  - Breaking with the Stereotype
  
- The New Woman
  
  - Typists in Trouble
  
  - Contradictions

86
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

During times of societal conflict throughout German history, the issue of sexual morality becomes the topic of public debate. The results of what some consider declining morals, namely unplanned pregnancies and illegitimate children, concern not only the individuals involved, but also the state. Restrictive legislation leads women to take desperate measures. Attempts at liberalization trigger heated debate. As science advances, new insights and developments cause controversy over their ethical impact on what we believe and how, or even whether, to implement the new technology. We find this debate reflected, indeed carried out, in fictionalized form as well. While abortion has been much discussed in contemporary feminist discourse, the literary works, both contemporary and historical, in which abortion is a theme have received very little attention. This dissertation will analyze how the themes of infanticide, illegitimate children, and abortion function within the literary texts, paying particular attention to the portrayal of the women involved. It will also examine how cultural production evolves and interacts with public policy decisions concerning population and reproductive issues.

Originally limited to literary treatments of abortion, the subject of this dissertation grew to include illegitimacy and infanticide because the issues are intertwined. While there is certainly no shortage of illegitimate children throughout German literature -- Hartman von Aue's Gregorius (also the product of an
incestuous relationship), Eugenie in Goethe's drama Die natürliche Tochter, Kleist's Käthchen von Heilbronn, to name a few -- my primary concern in this dissertation are the mothers and, when present, the fathers who must make a decision about the future of the pregnancy and the child. As even these fictional decisions are made within the framework of the legal possibilities and/or limitations, it is necessary to review the prevailing legal situation of each period covered in order to contextualize the decisions. In this way, the temptation to judge the women as well as the men from the present-day point of view can be avoided.

The search for the historical-social aspects behind the cultural images of women, which Silvia Bovenschen found impossible for many aspects of the lives of women of the 18th century,¹ is not as big a concern for this particular aspect of women's history. Women's work of reproduction sometimes coincides and sometimes conflicts with men's interests. For this reason, what we would today call crisis pregnancies (i.e. unwanted, illegitimate, which are not always one and the same) have long been publicly debated, perceived moral lapses and their punishments well documented, even though women had and today still have little say in the actual decisions made on their behalf. Through various sources, the authors had access to such documentation, sometimes in the women's own

words,\(^2\) and often used this documentation as part of their research. As we shall see, this knowledge did not free many of the male authors from portraying stereotypical women.

Works that use unplanned pregnancies as a theme often come in clusters. In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, there was great concern about infanticide and illegitimate children. From the last quarter of the 18th century through the first decade of the 19th century, numerous plays, stories, songs and ballads utilized the figure of the child murderer to protest inhumane laws. The literature of this period has been examined by scholars numerous times; a review of the literature will be provided later in the introduction. During the remainder of the 19th century, the theme occurred only a handful of times. It was not until the late 1920s and early 1930s, when economic need became widespread and the birth rate and abortion occupied a central role in public discourse, that we, in chapter 2, note another cluster, actually a veritable flood of novels and plays that protest the prevailing laws. The tide was stemmed by the Machtübernahme in 1933. An excursus will discuss the laws the National Socialist regime implemented as part of their population policy to manipulate the make-up of German society. Knowledge of Nazi abortion policies is crucial to understanding the German postwar debate and sensibilities. Chapter 3 looks at postwar society and literature, in which we observe three phases: works in the early postwar period were written in reaction to war atrocities; a cluster of works

\(^2\) In the form of court testimony, personal acquaintance or experience, public confessions.
appeared in the early 1980s, after the reemergence of the women’s movement and the liberalization of abortion laws in the 1970s; two novels by women written after reunification explore how choice affects women’s lives.

**Early History**

Ideas about the morality and legality of abortion and infanticide have fluctuated throughout history and are tied to the social role and legal status held by women within a particular culture. According to Heilwig Droste, women in the agrarian period of human civilization derived power from their maternal function, since the role men played in procreation was not yet discovered; men worshipped the maternal because they feared a power they did not understand.³ It was not until the Stone and Bronze Ages that men were recognized as fathers. “Was zuvor heilig war, wird jetzt unrein.”⁴ Women were then relegated to a position as the property of men, first their father’s, then their husband’s. For her husband a woman served mainly as “die Brutstätte seiner Nachkommen.”⁵ August Bebel, writing almost a hundred years before Droste, came to similar conclusions.⁶ Drawing mainly on the works of Johann Jakob Bachofen and Lewis Morgan,⁷

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⁴ Droste 7; “What before was holy now becomes impure.” Unless otherwise noted, English translations that appear in the footnotes are my own.

⁵ Droste 8; “the incubator of his progeny.”

⁶ August Bebel, Die Frau und der Sozialismus, 56th ed. (1878; Berlin: Dietz, 1946) 73-75.

⁷ Specifically Bachofen’s Das Mutterrecht (1861) and Morgan’s Die Urgesellschaft (German version 1891).
Bebel attributed the shift from matriarchal to patriarchal social structures to the development of trades. Men sought to retain the profits of their businesses and secure inheritance rights for their own children so that the money and property would not pass to the wife’s relatives. Monogamous marriages replaced polygamous clans to assist in establishing paternity. The man then became the head of the household and controlled the family’s wealth, leaving women with the sole purpose of producing progeny. Strict restraints were placed on women’s sexual behavior to prevent illegitimate births, and deviating from these norms was severely punished.

Men, however, were not held to the same standards. On the contrary, Bebel points to two women in the Old Testament, Sar‘ai and Rachel, who, because they were barren, encouraged their husbands to commit adultery.\(^8\) Both women use their maids as surrogates, as the children born to women within the household were also considered legitimate heirs.\(^9\) And in both cases there is evidence of the envy barren women harbored toward fertile women and, conversely, of the contempt in which fertile women held barren women. These examples

\(^8\) Bebel 75f. The first example is Gen. 16.1-2: “Now Sar‘ai, Abram’s wife, bore him no children. She had an Egyptian maid whose name was Hagar; and Sar‘ai said to Abram, ‘Behold now, the LORD has prevented me from bearing children; go in to my maid; it may be that I shall obtain children by her.’ And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sar‘ai.” Hagar does conceive and then shows contempt for her barren mistress. The second passage is Gen. 30.1ff: “When Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, she envied her sister; and she said to Jacob, ‘Give me children, or I shall die!’ . . . Then she said, ‘Here is my maid Hilhah; go in to her, that she may bear upon my knees, and even I may have children through her.’” Jacob had two sons by Hilhah, which enabled Rachel to feel that she had triumphed over her sister.

\(^9\) Bebel 75.
show how women had internalized the requirements of male-dominated society to bear offspring for their husbands. A woman’s status in the community and particularly among other women was linked directly to her ability to produce an heir.

Christine Wittrock reports that early Egyptian and Hebrew societies had no laws against abortion.¹⁰ Since wars continually depleted the population and childlessness was considered a disgrace, the incidence of abortion was likely low, although later Hebrew records do point to the use of abortifacients.¹¹ She points out that in the Old Testament, the sole law concerning the death of a fetus¹² merely provided for negligent actions by a third party causing a miscarriage, which was punished by a fine payable to the husband.¹³ This law illustrates the extent to which women were viewed as property and the monetary value that was attached to their biological functions. It is also significant that this law is buried between laws concerning injury to slaves.

Abortion was not punished by the Greeks, but they did punish those who abandoned newborns.¹⁴ Bebel remarks that the Greeks were completely open in

¹⁰ Christine Wittrock, Abtreibung und Kindesmord in der neueren deutschen Literatur (Frankfurt/Main: n.p., 1978) 3-4.
¹¹ Wittrock 3-4.
¹² Exod. 21.22: “When men strive together, and hurt a woman with child, so that there is a miscarriage, and yet no harm follows, the one who hurt her shall be fined, according as the woman’s husband shall lay upon him; and he shall pay as the judges determine.”
¹³ Witrock 3-4.
¹⁴ Witrock 4.
their use of abortion and permitted midwives to perform them. Aristotle even prescribed abortions for married women who became pregnant despite taking precautions to prevent conception.\textsuperscript{15} Greek philosophers in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C., including Hippocrates, Diogenes of Apollonia, Empedocles, Plato, and Aristotle, pondered the nature of the fetus and its status regarding abortion. It is in this time that the question was raised about when life actually began and whether or not the fetus possessed a soul. Hippocrates postulated that the male fetus was an unformed mass until the 30th day, the female until the 40th day of pregnancy.\textsuperscript{16} This idea was picked up again in the Middle Ages by St. Thomas Aquinas and directly influenced the Church’s stance on abortion\textsuperscript{17} in addition to perpetuating the notion that males were more important. Whereas Hippocrates vows to avoid abortion, Plato proposed abortion if the age of either parent was outside a specific range (20-40 for women, 25-55 for men). Aristotle believed the state should determine the birth rate to prevent overpopulation and that abortion could be used to achieve the desired results.\textsuperscript{18}

Roman law classified abortion as a matter of civil, not criminal law. In the late second to early third centuries A.D. under Septimius Severus, abortion became a criminal offense based on the belief that a woman intentionally thwarted

\textsuperscript{15} Bebel 201.

\textsuperscript{16} Wittrock 4ff.

\textsuperscript{17} Michael Gante, \textit{§ 218 in der Diskussion: Meinungs- und Willensbildung 1945-1976} (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1991) 11-12.

\textsuperscript{18} Wittrock 6-7.
her husband's hopes for offspring.¹⁹ If a woman had an abortion without her husband's consent, it was considered grounds for the husband to divorce her.²⁰ Conversely, if the man desired no (additional) children, he could order his wife to terminate the pregnancy²¹ since he, as the head of the family, had sole discretion over the life or death of his children, his slaves and his wife.²² Single women, however, were permitted to abort without punishment.²³ Wittrock remarks that Roman historians bemoaned the widespread use of abortion.²⁴

It is interesting to note parallels between the ancient and modern discourses on population policy. We find Plato's concerns about overpopulation echoed in modern China, where urban couples are limited to one child and abortion is mandatory for subsequent pregnancies. During the reign of Augustus, concerns were voiced about underpopulation. To avoid infringing on men's private property rights by prohibiting abortion, however, provisions were created within the civil code that were disadvantageous to men who remained unmarried or


²⁰ Wittrock 8.


²² Wittrock 8.

²³ Johimsen 14.

²⁴ Wittrock 8.
childless.\textsuperscript{25} As we shall see in Chapter 2, population policy and the abortion debate during the first half of the 20th century focused in part on the need for an adequate number of children to ensure a sufficient future supply of factory workers or soldiers for either the Kaiser or the Führer. And even in the early 1980s, concerns were raised that Germany as we know it would end should the birth rate among German women continue to remain low. Welfare schemes implemented in the 1920s and 1930s, as well as \textit{Kindergeld} and tax deductions offered by the German government today function in the same way as Roman laws to encourage citizens to have children.

\textbf{Early German Laws}

The legal scholar Reinhart Maurach reports that early Germanic law cast abortion into the realm of magic and duly punished its perpetrators.\textsuperscript{26} Wittrock, drawing on research by Otto Ehinger, refers to the lex Salica, lex Ribuaria and the lex Alamanorum which levied fines for negligent actions by third parties that resulted in miscarriage.\textsuperscript{27} Wittrock assumes that abortion and infanticide that occurred with the consent of the family were not punished.\textsuperscript{28} In contrast to Roman and Greek laws that gave preference to males by shortening the time abortions of male fetuses were allowed, the lex Alamanorum provided for higher fines if the

\textsuperscript{25} Wittrock 8.

\textsuperscript{26} Maurach 50.

\textsuperscript{27} Wittrock 9-10.

\textsuperscript{28} Wittrock 10.
aborted fetus could already be recognized as a female. The Langobards, who, according to Wittrock, held on to Germanic beliefs longer than other tribes, still allowed abortion with consent of the woman’s guardian as late as 1080.29

Illegitimacy was quite another matter in Germanic law. “The oldest Teutonic law required that a man who had impregnated a maiden should be killed like an adulterer. The fallen girl was either killed or exiled from home and country by being sold into slavery.”30

In the few instances in which medieval Volksrechte, Gesetzessammlungen, and the later Weistümer addressed abortion, it was not considered a crime, but merely a Flagitium or Schandtat.31 The Bavarian Landesordnung (1474), Tiroler Halsgerichtsordnung (1499), the Bamberger Halsgerichtsordnung (1507) were the first laws which codified abortion as a crime and called for the death penalty for aborting a fetus older than 40 days. The last of these laws served as the standard for the German-speaking areas into the 19th century, although any existing local custom could take precedence.32 In the late Middle Ages under the influence of church law that asserted that the male fetus received its soul on the 40th day of

29 Wittrock 10.
30 Oscar Helmuth Werner, The Unmarried Mother in German Literature with Special Reference to the Period 1770-1800 (New York: Columbia UP, 1917) 23.
31 Gante 10.
32 Gante 10.
pregnancy but that the female fetus received its soul on the 80th day, abortion was equated with the killing of a child already born.

Indeed, infanticide at that time was a greater problem than abortion. Oscar Werner notes that “infanticide was the most common crime in western Europe from the Middle Ages to the end of the eighteenth century.” Under the “deterrence theory” (Abschreckungstheorie) of punishment that operates according to the principle that the severity of the punishment should increase with the frequency of offenses, sentences for infanticide or abortion were severe, cruel, and mandatory. Common punishments included impalement, decapitation, sacking (being sewn into a sack, often together with dogs, cats, or snakes, and thrown into water to drown), and “Zwicken mit glühenden Zangen bis auf den Tod.” One medieval legal codex provides for the following, particularly gruesome combination: “Die sol man lebendig in ein grab, ein domen heck auf iren leib legen, sie mit erde beschuten, und ir ein eichen pfal durch ir herz schlan.”

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34 In all fairness to the Church, it must be noted that the classical Greeks questioned whether women and slaves even had a soul (Droste 8).

35 Werner 1.

36 Werner 24.

37 Werner 26.

38 Jochimsen 14; “pinching with red-hot tongs until death.”

39 Quoted in Jochimsen 14; “She shall be thrown into a grave, a thorn bush placed on her body, she shall be covered with dirt and an oaken stake driven through her heart.”
Compared to this sentence, decapitation alone was considered a mild sentence and was reserved for cases with mitigating circumstances.

Punishment for aborting an as yet "unsouled" fetus was left to the discretion of the judge.⁴⁰ Women who were convicted of abortion as well as women who had committed infanticide were also subjected to public ridicule. Even women who bore illegitimate children were not exempted. Wemer notes, "These cruel forms of punishment by the civil courts, and it is well to remember that these courts were dominated absolutely by the church, were paralleled by the most humiliating public church penance for the unmarried mother who did not kill her child."⁴¹

The 17th century brought new insights into fetal development. William Harvey's discovery that the fetus possessed its own circulatory system, independent from the mother, seemed to dispel the souled vs. unsouled view. It also led to the belief that the fetus was a living being from the moment of conception, which was generally accepted as true in the 18th century.⁴² However, the legal concept of fetuses with and without souls persisted until the mid-18th century.⁴³ It was in the 19th century that the Aristotelian concept was replaced by the term werdendes Leben,⁴⁴ that was defined as beginning with the joining of egg and sperm and

⁴⁰ Maurach 50; Gante 10.
⁴¹ Werner 27.
⁴² Gante 12.
⁴³ Gante 13.
⁴⁴ Literally, "becoming life," but generally equivalent to "unborn life."
lasting until the onset of labor. Indeed, the Aristotelian concept has not yet been completely abandoned. The debate in the former West Germany in the 1970s on the introduction of the *Fristenregelung* included references by several politicians to the differentiation between "foetus animatus / foetus inanimatus" and "eyn lebendig / noch nit lebendig kindt." 

**Storm and Stress**

The topics of illegitimacy and infanticide occupied many sectors of society during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. They were perceived as major problems and dealt with harshly. The woman who openly bore a child faced arrest and public humiliation; this also meant that she had no prospects of employment or marriage after her release from prison. The death penalty was handed down not only for infanticide, but also for the concealment of pregnancy or of childbirth. Thus, a woman who was pregnant and unmarried found her life ruined no matter what she did. Frederick the Great noted in 1777 that of all executions, most were girls who had committed infanticide.

It had become clear that these measures had little effect on curbing the crime. Richard van Dülmen points out that harsh sentences actually led to its

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45 Maurach 50, “Skandal” 58.
46 Gante 11. This information is contained in footnote 5.
47 Werner 9.
increase.\textsuperscript{48} As early as the 1740s, Frederick the Great began to focus on understanding the underlying causes of infanticide.\textsuperscript{49} He concluded that the harsh punishments handed down by the courts actually deprived the state of two subjects (the dead child and the executed mother), and that the law was also responsible for putting the young women in such a desperate position that they committed murder. Frederick the Great and other European leaders made progress by banning torture and limiting execution methods to decapitation. But many felt that more needed to be done. What ensued was “the greatest revolt against antiquated laws and customs that Europe has ever experienced.”\textsuperscript{50}

In the context of this revolt against the immorality of a church and a state willing to kill in the name of morality, a sampling of the many literary works will be examined. First, however, a look at an example of the unofficial public debate is warranted because of its influence on official policy.

\textbf{The Mannheim Prize}

In 1780, an anonymous person\textsuperscript{51} offered a prize of 100 ducats for an essay on the question, “Welches sind die besten ausführbaren Mittel, demKin-

\textsuperscript{48} Richard van Dümen, Frauen vor Gericht: Kindsmord in der frühen Neuzeit (Frankfurt: Fischer 1991) 98.

\textsuperscript{49} This and the following according to Werner 35ff.

\textsuperscript{50} Werner 39.

\textsuperscript{51} The identity of the donor was a matter of controversy. The 1818 obituary of Ferdinand von Lamezan names him as the prize donor of the essay contest. According to the obituary, Lamezan was a \textit{Regierungsrat} and \textit{Oberappellationsrat} in Mannheim who was instrumental in abolishing torture and the death penalty for infanticide cases in the Palatinate, and inducing Kurfürstin Elisabeth Augusta to found an “Entbindungshaus für unglückliche Mütter” and a school for midwives (Rameckers 83; Wittrock 24).
dermod abzuhelfen, ohne die Unzucht zu begünstigen.\textsuperscript{52} Over 400 essays were reportedly submitted, an enormous number for its time that attests to the prevalence of the concern about the problem. A panel of three judges each chose a different winning essay; all three were published together as a book in 1784.

One of the prize winners, Johann Gottlieb Benjamin Pfeil, an official in Rammelburg, believed that the cause of infanticide was not just fear of shame, rather more a decline in morals. He saw the roots of this decline in society's overemphasis on pleasure over duty to society. He did not believe that more severe punishments would deter infanticide for two reasons: women were generally in a distraught state and thus not accountable for their actions; and the crime was not pre-meditated. He rejected foundling houses arguing that the high mortality rate\textsuperscript{53} was tantamount to delayed infanticide. Improving the character of the nation through education, he thought, was the key to preventing in-


\textsuperscript{53} See also Bebel 275.
fanticide. He was also in favor of measures to promote early marriage and of harsher punishments for the seducers of women.

A Kammerrat in Darmstadt by the name of Klippstein was selected for his essay that favored differentiating between simple infanticide and malicious infanticide. The more severe penalty should consist of leading the woman, wearing a white dress spattered with blood, around the streets of the town surrounded by guards and followed by schoolchildren singing appropriate songs. The execution would then take place in front of the woman’s residence. Women sentenced to the less severe penalty would only think they were to be executed.

Die Täterin müßte sich dann zu allen den tragischen Aufzügen bequemen, auch die Todesangst ausstehen, dann nach erhaltener Gnade zeitlebens im Gefängnis bewahret werden. Dadurch aber würde sie nicht für immer den Augen der Welt entzogen, nein! Jährlich den nächsten Sonntag nach der begangenen Tat würde sie dem Volke vor der Kirchtür in einem besonderem Gewande, einen Strick um den Hals und Fackeln in den Händen, vorgestellt, auch den Tag darauf in den Schulen zur Warnung der Jugend eingeführet.\textsuperscript{54}

Klippstein also proposed a law that would require the man involved to marry and support the fallen woman (Geschwächte), if necessary with the help of welfare.

As Wittrock points out, the woman is not consulted as to whether she desires marriage. “Offensichtlich ging Klippstein (und wohl auch die meisten seiner

\textsuperscript{54} Quoted in Rameckers 86; “The perpetrator would have to submit herself to all the tragic processions, even endure the fear of death, then, after receiving mercy, be confined to prison for life. But by this she would not be forever withheld from the eyes of the world, no! Annually, on the Sunday after the deed, she would be presented to the people before the door of the church wearing a special garment, a rope around her neck, and torches in her hands; the next day, too, led into the schools as a warning to the youth.”
Zeitgenossen) davon aus, daß es für das Mädchen in dieser Lage das höchste Glück sei, geheiratet zu werden."^{55}

The third prize winner, Kreuzfeld, was a professor of politics and His Majesty’s deputy librarian. He saw several causes of infanticide: shame, revenge, destitution, and convenience. He believed the public shaming of the woman should be discontinued. However, in order to maintain the honor of marriage, illegitimacy should not become acceptable. He also rejected the more severe and more theatrical punishments as impractical. His third proposal was to conceal shameful illegitimacy through charitable institutions or foundling houses, though he, like Pfeil, acknowledged the problem with the high mortality rate of the latter.

Another essay proposed instituting foundling houses and foster care funded through either a lump-sum payment from wealthy women or a tax to care for children of indigent women.^{56} One author proposed employing a censor (Sittenrichter), paying midwives a premium for each pregnancy detected, and the use of chastity belts to prevent illicit sex.^{57} Vocational training for young girls and admitting illegitimate children to trades was one of the more practical solutions. The author, C. C. Spörl, believed the major cause of infanticide to be financial

^{55} Wittrock 29; “Apparently Klippstein (and probably most of his contemporaries as well) assumed that it would be the utmost of good fortune for girls in this situation to get married.”

^{56} Wittrock 32-33; the author was Jakob Völkersamen.

^{57} Wittrock 33; the author was Karl Müller.
need; training girls and young women so that they could later earn their own living would solve both problems. Several authors proposed allowing women to give birth anonymously.\textsuperscript{58} Werner reports that reviews of the published essays generally rejected the proposals as "in part impracticable and nonsensical projects of government, in part dangerous quackery, in part insufficient palliatives."\textsuperscript{59}

The Swiss educator Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi also wrote an essay for the contest, but did not submit it. Instead, he expanded it to book-length and had it published on his own. Pestalozzi ascribed the cause of vice and crime to social circumstances. He believed in an innate sense of right and duty, virtue and wisdom, and blamed cruel laws and those who made them for causing the problem. He criticized the legal system, in which the wealthy were able to buy their way out of cruel sentences for concealed and/or illegitimate pregnancy. Under such conditions, it was understandable that poor women committed infanticide. Hypocrisy and double standards were responsible for the social conditions that led to infanticide. We will see similar criticism of class-discriminatory legal practice during the Weimar Republic. Pestalozzi believed that the state exonerated the fathers by not requiring them to support the mothers adequately. By killing their children, girls were only trying do what the state expected of them, that is to remain childless. Wittrock assumes Pestalozzi must have either had access to a number of court records or had spoken to women who had

\textsuperscript{58} Völkersamen, Spörl, Schlosser.
committed infanticide, since he lists reasons given by women themselves for committing the crime. These reasons include the fear of losing their jobs, threats by judges to execute them should they have another illegitimate pregnancy, and, particularly for women of the higher classes, protecting family honor.

Illegitimacy was generally considered the main cause for women to commit infanticide. Other reasons, such as financial need and shame could also be traced back to the legal status of the child. While the laws sanctioned sex only within the confines of marriage, Werner discusses how the Church actually worked to hinder marriage and instead promoted celibacy. "[Paul and the church fathers] thought marriage was at best a make-shift, a state wherein it was permissible to satisfy impure and unholy desires, the satisfaction of which a carnal nature had made necessary." If marriage was inevitable, however, it should take place on the Church's terms. These terms stipulated a life-long monogamous union for the purpose of procreation. "By this teaching the church immediately came into conflict with the practice of concubination, which existed among all the peoples over which it exerted its influence."  

Concubines, or natural wives as opposed to legal wives, found their basis in natural law. Natural law also posited the innate goodness of man and thus directly conflicted with the Church's belief that man is inherently sinful. We will

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60 Quoted in Werner 6.
60 Werner 16.
61 Werner 17.
see the conflict between natural and Church law addressed in the 20th century by author Heinrich Böll. Silvia Bovenschen shows that behind the rhetoric of equality found in much of the 18th century discourse, the equating of women with nature rather than culture served to support the status quo.\textsuperscript{62}

Werner remarks in 1917 that "[a]s far back as we are able to trace the history of man the father who left the mother of his child in the lurch was considered a monster."\textsuperscript{63} However, only a few of the essays favored increased punishments for the father of the illegitimate child. It was women who showed the visible results of an illicit relationship, and it is her behavior which had to be controlled.\textsuperscript{64} Van Dülmen discusses the essay by the physician Franz Heinrich Birmstiel who used this very point to accuse the judiciary of discriminatory and unequal sentencing practices.\textsuperscript{65} Men who were implicated in an illegitimate relationship were also subjected to severe punishments, however women rarely betrayed them. "The reason he was so seldom punished is to be found in the fact that the courts always accepted the man's denial in preference to the woman's accusation. It was a war against the unmarried mother and not against the unmarried father."\textsuperscript{66}

\textsuperscript{62} In this context, see particularly Bovenschen's chapter on "Kulturelle Stereotypien als methodisches Problem" (65-79).

\textsuperscript{63} Werner 13.

\textsuperscript{64} See also Werner 24-25.

\textsuperscript{65} Van Dülmen 106-107.

\textsuperscript{66} Werner 32.
Infanticide in Literature

The theme of infanticide was one of the most common in plays, novellas, poems, and ballads of the Storm and Stress period. As such, it has been the subject of several scholarly studies over the years. For this reason, I shall dispense with a detailed account of the individual works and offer instead an overview of the character types and their functions.

The Fallen Woman. The women, actually most often girls, who commit infanticide are shown to be victims of multiple perpetrators: of the men who seduce or even rape them, of unfair laws, of society that oppresses them.

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69 Weber 61ff.
are good girls from good homes. "Die Verführte ist meist aus bürgerlichem Haus und beinhaltet das ganze beschränkte Frauenideal des Bürgers: tugendsam, anmutig, fromm, ehrlich, unerfahren bis naiv, ganz Naturkind [. . .] - kurz: sie verkörpert das männlich-chauvinistische Wunschbild von Frau." Good looks often lead to their downfall. They sometimes agree to have sex in the belief that a marriage will eventually follow. Unfortunately, they usually become pregnant from their first sexual experience. All the women who commit infanticide are arrested and put to death, but none of them betrays her lover. They commit infanticide for one or more of several reasons: abandonment, hatred, jealousy of another girl, fear of shame, ridicule of parents and/or society, and despair.

The despair they feel causes them to commit infanticide in a more or less hysterical state. The concept of Unzurechnungsfähigkeit, something in between diminished accountability for one's actions and temporary insanity, serves two purposes. It heightens the sympathy the audience feels with the woman and reduces the burden of blame she is to carry; we are to look elsewhere for the truly responsible party. At the same time, it allows the author to support social change without condoning the act of infanticide.

The women's frequent refusal to name the father contributed to men going unpunished and to the women continuing to be blamed. These women are not revolutionaries. They generally accepted the punishment as their fate

70 Wittrock 55; "The seducee generally comes from a middle-class home and represents the middle-class man's entire limited female ideal: virtuous, pleasant, pious, honest, inexperienced to naive, a total nature child [. . .] - in short: she embodies the male chauvinist ideal of woman."
alone, and thus became an instrument of their own oppression. Had they been more vocal in implicating the man involved, men may have become less inclined to take advantage of women. Werner describes "the willingness of the girl to sacrifice her life in expiation of her crime" as a "truly feminine and at the same time typically human trait."\textsuperscript{71} That they went to their death protecting the men who betrayed or abandoned them demonstrates the internalization of pregnancy as a woman's problem and of their subordinate role in society.

The extreme example of this internalization of women's place can be found in the character of Gretchen in Goethe's \textit{Faust}, the "eternal feminine." "In order to make her tragedy more effective and to prove her innocence, Goethe portrays Gretchen as a typical representative of her sex. Her naïveté, her simplicity, her sincerity and her naturally willing surrender to the man ruled solely by passion, win the favor of the reader from the outset."\textsuperscript{72}

\textbf{The Cad.} The illegitimate fathers use any means possible to bed their victims. Flattery, gifts, the promise of marriage are favorite tactics. The soldier was a particularly common figure in literature, and soldiers were widely considered to be a major contributor to delinquency and crime. In the belief that marriage made for a bad combatant, no soldiers were permitted to marry.\textsuperscript{73} Any

\textsuperscript{71} Werner 103.

\textsuperscript{72} Werner 102.

\textsuperscript{73} The proposal at the end of Lenz's \textit{Soldaten} to sacrifice a limited number of young girls to a revolving troop of concubines for the soldiers' for the safety of the remainder of womankind must be read at best as an intellectual exaggeration for the sake of argument.
marriage promises made by soldiers were thus null and void. Werner reports that there was a large standing army due to the recent Seven Years’ War, which exacerbated the problem.\textsuperscript{74}

Despite the stereotype, some of the more well known authors present significant exceptions to the rule. Grönigenseck in Wagner’s Kindermörderinn, one of the more vile seducer figures, has a change of heart and intends to marry Evchen, but he becomes the victim of a scheme himself. His fellow soldier, Hasenpoth, is determined not to let Grönigenseck leave the service to marry below his class, so he writes Evchen a letter signing Grönigenseck’s name. In the letter, he makes her believe Grönigenseck will not keep his promise to marry her. Grönigenseck returns too late to save Evchen and the baby. Lenz has his Hofmeister, Läuffer, castrate himself; he later finds a woman who is willing to marry him despite his deficiency. Zerbin, in Lenz’s novella of the same name, imposes the same punishment on himself as Marie suffered: death. The insupportability of his actions becomes clear to him albeit belatedly. Lenz allows Zerbin to evolve, while the other authors are content to lament and ultimately resign themselves to existing conditions. Lenz shows us that, along with Zerbin, the current conditions must die, too.

\textbf{The Parents.} The parents of the girls are good people who have raised their daughters well and are looking out for their best interests. The mother is sometimes characterized as a social climber, trying to secure an advantageous

\textsuperscript{74} Werner 37.
match for her daughter in a higher class. The father, on the other hand, is usually overbearing and strict. The fathers’ tendency to yell has earned them a fixed place in the cast of German characters known as the “blustering father.”

Another variation is for the girl to have only one parent. In this way, either the educational influence of the mother or the protective aspect of the father is missing.

**The Class Paradigm.** One of the most common motifs is the seduction of a girl from a lower social class by a man of a higher social class.

Das Motiv des verführten Mädchens war offensichtlich besonders geeignet, die Gemüter zu erhitzen, ging es doch einerseits darum, dem selbstbewusster gewordenen Bürger sein Eigentum an den Frauen seiner eigenen Klasse mehr als bisher zu verteidigen, andererseits auch um zwei völlig verschiedene Moral- und Ehruffassungen, die miteinander kollidierter. Das Thema Kindesmord eignete sich vorzüglich als Anklage gegen den Adel, denn es sind meist bürgerliche Mädchen aus “anständigem Haus” (was oft durch einen väterlichen Haustyrannen markiert wird), die von einem “höhergestellten”, meist adligen Mann (oft genug einem Offizier) verführt werden, dann auch prompt: vom ersten und einzigen Beischlaf schwanger werden und damit das ganze bürgerliche Haus ins Unglück stürzen.

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75 Werner 88.

76 Wittrock 53; “The motif of the seduced girl was apparently particularly suited to flare tempers; on the one hand it was a matter of the middle-class man, who had become more self-confident, defending his ownership of the women of his own class more than he had done previously, on the other hand two completely different concepts of morality and honor colliding with each other. The topic of infanticide was superbly suited as an indictment of the nobility, since it is mostly middle-class girls from “decent homes” (often marked by a paternal house tyrant), who are seduced by a “higher placed,” mostly noble man (often enough an officer), then also promptly become pregnant from the first and only act of intercourse and because of that plunge the entire bourgeois house into misfortune.”
Lenz's *Der Hofmeister* (1774) actually reverses the class paradigm. It is Läuffer who is not a member of the nobility and Gustchen who is. During Läuffer's first discussion with the Major, he is told in no uncertain terms that Gustchen is to be married to a noble man:

> und wenn Gott mir die Gnade tun wollte, daß ich sie noch vor meinem Ende mit einem General oder Staatsminister vom ersten Range versorgt sähe -- denn keinen andern soll sie sein Lebtage bekommen [. . .]. -- Merk Er sich das -- Und wer meiner Tochter zu nahe kommt oder ihr worin zu Leid lebt -- die erste beste Kugel durch den Kopf. Merk Er sich das.\(^77\)

**The Literary Strategy.** "Practically all of the writers were able by their writings to win sympathy for the unmarried mother. They thus fulfilled the first requirement of tragedy, to evoke pity. But in the fulfillment of the second requirement, the instillation of fear, most of them failed utterly."\(^78\) The graphic realism, such as the offstage rape of Evchen and her on-stage infanticide in Wagner's *Kindermörderinn*, Läuffer's self-castration in Lenz's *Der Hofmeister*, caused enough of an uproar to make it impossible to perform the plays without revisions. Even then, the plays reached only a relatively small number of people. Because of particularly this last fact, van Dülmen downplays the role of the literary works in influencing the public discourse.\(^79\) He, along with

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\(^{77}\) Lenz, *Hofmeister* 338; "and if God would grace me before I die with seeing her furnished with a first-rate general or a minister of state -- no other will get her all his life [. . .]. -- Take note of that -- And anyone who comes too close to my daughter or harms her in any way -- the first best bullet through the head. Take note of that."

\(^{78}\) Werner 74.

\(^{79}\) van Dülmen 104.
Rameckers, believes the authors were more interested in exposing abuses by the nobility. "Schließlich ging es den Stürmern und Drängern ja auch nicht um die 'gewöhnliche' Kindsmörderin, im Mittelpunkt ihres Interesses stand vielmehr die Kritik am adligen Verhalten und am Mißbrauch des anständigen Bürgertums durch die tugendlosen Adligen."\(^{80}\) Van Dülmen concludes that the Mannheim Prize did much more to frame "die mentalen und ideologischen Voraussetzungen in der Gesellschaft"\(^{81}\) for a shift in concentration away from punishment toward understanding the motivations of the woman. These motivations were to be found in an intertwined combination of social pressures and economic factors.

The 19th Century

The ebb of the public discussion on infanticide correlated with a reduction in the number of infanticide cases and prosecutions at the end of the 18th century. The use of the subject in literature largely disappeared as well. While the penalties had become less severe and the rate of infanticide had declined,\(^{82}\) the legal status and social stigma of illegitimacy persisted. Only a handful of works touched on illegitimacy and/or infanticide during the 19th century. These works engage in social criticism, but it is directed at the societal structures that provide the motivation for infanticide rather than at specific practices.

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\(^{80}\) Van Dülmen 104; "Ultimately, for the writers of the Storm and Stress period it was not about the 'usual' child murderer; the center of their interest was much more criticism of the behavior of the nobility and of the abuse of the decent bourgeoisie by immoral nobles."

\(^{81}\) Van Dülmen 111; "the mental and ideological preconditions in society."

\(^{82}\) Werner 105ff.
Almost 30 years after the Storm and Stress cluster, Heinrich von Kleist used the theme of illegitimacy in two works\textsuperscript{83} to illustrate the breach between church doctrine and written law on the one side and a morality based on natural law and mutual cooperation and compassion on the other. Kleist’s works continue the criticism on a system that had effectively changed so little. \textit{Das Erdbeben in Chili} (1807)\textsuperscript{84} is the story of two young lovers whose lives are taken by a maniacal mob that represents a force more destructive than the earthquake that destroyed the city of Santiago in 1647 in which the story is set. Just 12 pages long, it is a tightly woven tale that refutes Christian imagery to envision a new society without classes or prejudices. The characters and the initial plot recall the tradition of the Storm and Stress period, particularly Lenz’s \textit{Hofmeister}. Jeronimo is a tutor who is dismissed to prevent a budding relationship with his pupil, Josephe, who is sent to a convent. Josephe, who is pregnant with Jeronimo’s child, goes into labor on the steps of the church during the Corpus Christi procession, after which both she and Jeronimo are jailed.

The earthquake that destroys the city also sets them free and is accompanied by images of rebirth as well as the destruction of symbols of church and state. When Jeronimo finds Josephe in the surrounding countryside, she is

\textsuperscript{83} Illegitimacy occurs as a theme in \textit{Das Käthchen von Heilbronn} as well; this piece, however, revolves around an illegitimate child raised by others, not the circumstances of her birth.

washing the child in a stream. They plan to wait in the city of La Conception to see if they are able to stay in their newly found paradise.

Only one church escaped destruction in Santiago, although it, too, is not undamaged. In going to the mass held there, they leave the new paradise in nature and return to the old order in the city. In his sermon, the prelate of the convent calls the earthquake retribution from God for the moral depravity of the city. As he details the sins committed by Josephe and Jeronimo, they and their companions devise a plan to leave the church. Someone recognizes the two lovers, and in the ensuing riot, Josephe and Jeronimo are bludgeoned to death, as are one of their companions and her son, who was mistaken for the illegitimate child. Their child escapes, and their companions raise the boy as their own.

Whether the earthquake with all of its consequences was an act of God or of nature remains unanswered. Through his choice of words and the use conditional clauses, Kleist continually casts doubt on the reality or durability of their paradise. His criticism is directed at the church as an institution, not at religion itself.

Kleist's *Die Marquise von O...* (1808)\(^{85}\) presents a unique constellation of events and characters. During a siege of the garrison where her father is commander, the Marquise is accosted by enemy soldiers. An officer in the rival army chases the soldiers off, after which she faints. He returns to propose to her, but

she refuses him. She discovers she is inexplicably pregnant. Being a widow, she must find some way to legitimize the child, if not for her own sake, then for that of her parents, who have asked her to leave their house.

To accomplish this task, she decides to go public. By announcing herself as a victim of rape she actually takes control of her own reputation. The doctor who examined her and the midwife who offered her an abortion know of her predicament. Had she accepted the Graf’s proposal, those members of society who can count to nine would also know the truth. The advertisement forces the man, who turns out to be the Graf, publicly to accept the role of the cad. The perception of immorality for herself is a worse fate than that of marrying the man whom she describes as the “Auswurf seiner Gattung.”

Clemens Brentano also uses the theme of honor, but combines it with familiar plots and characters of the Storm and Stress as well as with the mystic elements typical of the Romantic period. Together they provide the foundation to differentiate between true and false honor in Die Geschichte vom braven Kasperl und dem schönen Annerl (1817). Kasperl, a soldier returning home to his beloved Annerl, is robbed by two men he recognizes as his father and step-brother. After turning them in to the authorities, he kills himself because of the shame. Annerl, who was working as a servant, gives in to her employer’s advances, thinking Kasperl will never return. When she kills the baby that results

86 Kleist, Marquise 105; “the scum of his gender.”

87 Clemens Brentano, Die Geschichte vom braven Kasperl und dem schönen Annerl (1817; Bern: Scherz, 1947).
from this liaison, she is arrested and condemned to death because she refuses to denounce her seducer. Annerl’s godmother sends a petition to the king to request a Christian burial for Kasperl and Annerl. The messenger who delivers the king’s pardon is none other than the father of Annerl’s baby. When he learns he is too late to save her, he confesses his crime and kills himself. By committing suicide to atone for his part in causing the child’s and Annerl’s deaths, Grossinger accepts the consequences that only few men from the earlier models did. Both secular and sacred justice is served.

In Friedrich Hebbel’s Maria Magdalene (1844), we again see the concept of honor at the middle of the story. This time, however, family honor tears the family apart. Meister Anton’s concept of honor is rigid, so rigid in fact that he threatens to kill himself should his daughter Klara bring dishonor upon the house, especially since Klara’s brother has already been accused of stealing jewelry from a customer. The shock of this news caused Klara’s mother to have a stroke and die.

Klara is engaged to be married and is already pregnant. Her fiancé, Leonhard, has discovered that she will be given no dowry and is looking for a way to break their engagement. Her brother’s arrest provides just such an excuse, and Leonhard quickly becomes engaged to someone else. Even after Klara’s brother is cleared of the crime, Leonhard refuses to marry her. She throws herself down the well while fetching water. Ironically, someone saw that she jumped, so despite her sacrifice she does not save her family from disgrace.
In Theodor Fontane's novel Schach von Wuthenow (1882) the main male character's sense of honor is not at stake -- Schach keeps his honor intact --, but his sense of aesthetics is. Schach spends a considerable amount of time in the salon of the beautiful widow von Carayon and her intelligent daughter, Victoire, whose beauty is marred by pock-marks. Aware of the representational function of wives in the upper classes, Victoire has relinquished hopes of marrying and tries instead to foster an attachment between her mother and Schach. On one visit, Schach finds Victoire at home alone and seduces her. Naturally, when she becomes pregnant from that one encounter, he does the honorable thing and promises to marry her. He returns to his estate, planning to return for the wedding, but he delays his return for so long brooding about his predicament that Victoire's mother is forced to ask the king to intercede and order him back to court. He does marry Victoire, but kills himself on his wedding night. For Schach, form always takes precedence over content. While his attire and manners are impeccable, he tends toward blind obedience of the Prussian line in his political opinions. There is no question for him that he must do what social norms dictate and marry Victoire. However, her outward appearance, despite her talents, wit, and charm, makes a marriage impossible.

By the time Schach von Wuthenow was written in 1882, infanticide cases were uncommon, but abortion had become prevalent enough to warrant its own law. The Penal Code (Strafgesetzbuch) of 1871 banned all abortions. Much had changed, too, in the literature of the 19th century. It began with the child murder-
ess Gretchen dying in prison. It produced works in 1808, 1844, and 1882 that show women going to great lengths to legitimize their children in order to preserve family honor. It ended with the shocking depiction in Frank Wedekind's *Frühlings Erwachen* of a girl, who did not completely understand how she had gotten pregnant, dying from complications of an illegal abortion.

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CHAPTER 2

THE WEIMAR REPUBLIC

Wendla Bergmann’s death after a botched abortion in Frank Wedekind’s play, Frühlings Erwachen (1891, but not performed on stage until 1906), introduced a new option in treating unplanned pregnancies in literature. As we have seen, abortion was hardly a new subject in public discourse, but it had only been broached obliquely in literature. Advances in surgical abortion procedures and the development of new drugs from the mid-19th century made abortion safer, but it still harbored great risks for the life and health of women.¹ Nevertheless, increasing numbers of women were taking these risks. Even before the first World War, abortion replaced infanticide in the public’s mind as the root of social ills. With the exceptions of Rainer Maria Rilke’s short story “Frau Blaha’s Magd” (1899),² Bruno Schönlank’s play Verfluchter Segen (1920),³ and Bertolt Brecht’s


² Rainer Maria Rilke, “Frau Blaha’s Magd,” Sämtliche Werke, vol. 4 (Frankfurt: Insel, 1961) 623-29. This piece, not published until 1931, takes the child-like figure with diminished accountability of the 18th and 19th centuries to a new extreme. Annuschka, a young servant who is mentally challenged, disappears for several days. She bears a premature child in secret without knowing where it could have come from, wraps it up in an apron, tying the strings around its neck, and puts it in her suitcase. She puts on puppet shows for other children. They beg to see the big blue doll she has told them of. After they have all run in terror, she demolishes the toy stage and splits open the heads of all her dolls.

³ Bruno Schönlank Verfluchter Segen (Leipzig: Alfred Jahn, [1920]). A pregnant proletarian woman, whose insurance physician will not perform an abortion, drowns herself
poem "Von der Kindesmörderin Marie Farrar" (1927), the figure of the child murderess as a central focus of literature virtually disappeared. However, this "new" alternative did not become widespread in literature until the later years of the Weimar Republic, indeed generally not until after the stock market crash and the world economic crisis of the late 1920s. This chapter thus concentrates on the flood of literature produced between 1928 and 1933 that features abortion or attempted abortion as a central event or theme.

Abortion was a highly controversial and much-discussed topic during this time of economic and political upheaval. Any woman, even a fictional one, faced with an unplanned pregnancy is confronted with the abortion question within the framework of the contemporary debate. In weighing the issues of her particular

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situation as well as the overall ethical considerations, she becomes a participant in the on-going political discussion. In order to fictionalize the public debate, the authors had to present a plausible example. I shall thus examine in some detail the type of woman the authors chose to present and come to some conclusions about why a certain type was the preferred fictional abortion-seeker.

Much research has recently been done on the changing role of women both at home and in the workplace during the Weimar Republic as well as on the “intricate interdependence of representation and historical appearance of the modern woman.” The fictional women not only mirror the contemporary trends, but, since the authors are also almost exclusively men, the figures are informed by a male perspective on an issue which was, as Karin Hagemann puts it, “eine Frauensache,” a woman's problem. The female characters also reveal the male authors’ sometimes contradictory stance on women’s new role in society, which, in turn, are colored by their political convictions.

Historical Background

During the Weimar Republic, the legally permissible options open to single and married women who faced an unplanned pregnancy were extremely limited: either carry the pregnancy to term or hope for a miscarriage. Article 218 of the Penal Code (Strafgesetzbuch), essentially unchanged since its implementation in 1871, prohibited all methods of terminating pregnancies, including the artificial

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inducement of miscarriage. A government policy adopted in 1918 that functioned as a guideline for judicial decisions and sentencing, permitted abortion and/or voluntary sterilization only if the life of the mother was at risk. It included the stipulation that the procedure be performed by a registered physician, not a midwife or lay practitioner, and be reported to health officials. A reform of the law in 1926 reduced the penalties from penal servitude to imprisonment, but did not codify the medical justification into law.8

One of the reasons abortion became an ardently debated issue during the 1920s was that the birth rate had been continuously and precipitously declining since the turn of the century. “Internationally, high fertility was seen as a sign of

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national 'virility' and military power. It was natural that Germany should be concerned that she might fall behind in the population race -- as France had done.⁹ During the second half of the 19th century, the German birth rate had remained steady, averaging 37 births per thousand population annually. This was the highest rate in Europe next to Russia. In 1920, it had dropped to 25.9 (demonstrating a slight postwar increase) and continued to fall to 14.7 in 1933, representing the lowest percentage of births in Western Europe.¹⁰ Berlin's birth rate, at 9.5 per thousand births, was the lowest in the world.¹¹ Although still above replacement level,¹² these statistics were cause for great alarm, particularly since they were compounded by the heavy casualties suffered during the war. These war casualties left society with a disproportionately high number of women.¹³ But not only were married women having fewer children, the percentage of births out of wedlock by the "surplus women" was increasing, and that led to a parallel growth in infant and child mortality among illegitimate children. Abortions and miscarriages, particularly among married women, were also rising. It became apparent that the

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¹⁰ Usborne, Politics 32; Rudolf Frercks, German Population Policy (Berlin: Terramare, 1938) 3.

¹¹ Usborne, Politics 32.

¹² Usborne, Politics 30.

¹³ See August Bebel, Die Frau und der Sozialismus (1878; Berlin: Dietz, 1946) 221-32. Bebel discussed the now well-known tendency to a higher ratio of adult women to men. Although a greater proportion of males are born, more females survive into adulthood due to a higher infant survival rate and fewer accidental deaths. Bebel
“two-child system” had trickled down from the middle-classes to the traditionally child-rich proletariat.

In addition, the economic situation after the stock market crash of 1929 worsened to such an extent that, by January of 1932, unemployment had ballooned to over 6 million after a pre-crash low of 750,000 in 1928.\textsuperscript{14} Compounding the individual crises caused by unemployment was the concomitant drop in tax revenues, which resulted in a decrease in funds available for unemployment and welfare benefits.\textsuperscript{15} The needy became needier, thus the necessity to limit family size became even more urgent. Although the abortion issue was under debate before the crash, indeed even before World War I, it was not until this final, critical phase of the Weimar Republic, during the period of economic instability after 1929, of increasing political polarization and growing influence of the National Socialists, that most of the fictional works dealing with the issue appeared.

The Center party, which to a great degree represented the interests of the Catholic Church,\textsuperscript{16} and the conservative parties were united in their opposition to easing abortion restrictions. During the rapidly changing governments of the late 1920s and early 1930s, the Center held key positions and thus wielded great


\textsuperscript{15} Gay 159.

influence. Even in the great coalition headed by the Social Democrats from June of 1928 until March of 1930, they were represented in the cabinet and were thus able to block abortion reform legislation. The Center Party then also ran the government from March 1930 until May 1932 under Heinrich Brüning. Conservatives and Centrists viewed the increasing number of abortions primarily as a moral problem. They believed the “surplus women” to be morally depraved and viewed them as the source of the abortion scourge. In addition, they held them responsible for producing an increasing number of illegitimate children. They faulted working women for weaning infants off of healthy breast milk too early and leaving them with family members, in day-care centers, or even unsupervised in order to return to work. “[C]onservatives tended to see a relationship between many of the political and social [sic] ills of the time and a presumed decline in moral standards among the population.”17 Thus even married women who decided to remain childless or limit the size of their families were not only shirking a fundamental responsibility to the state, their moral values were also questionable.

Conservatives modified their pre-war concentration on pronatalism, which Cornelie Usborne describes as “the conviction that a nation’s military, economic and cultural influence was essentially derived from the size of its population [. . . and] that the state should stimulate the birth-rate above all else.”18 Without completely abandoning pronatalism, they shifted their attention to the quality of child-

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17 Petersen 508.
ren. The political center and right, along with the churches and other organizations such as the morality leagues (*Sittlichkeitsvereine*), worked to strengthen the traditional family by strictly enforcing abortion laws, restricting access to birth control information, imposing penalties on double-income families (*Doppelverdiener*), levying a bachelor tax, and offering home economics courses and homemaker helper programs. "Thus *Kinder, Küche, Kirche* was upgraded from a responsibility to a calling. [...] In this way, politicians of the center and right endeavored to make traditional roles attractive to a new generation by underwriting the father's authority and the mother's responsibility within the family."19

Left-liberal groups also concentrated on the quality of children, but believed in much different methods of achieving this goal. A radical faction within the Association of German Women's Clubs (Bund deutscher Frauenvereine) had supported the outright repeal of Article 218 as early as 1908. Ann Taylor Allen20 summarizes their argument that the world would be healthier and more moral if women could freely chose or refuse motherhood. Their plea was that it would help society more if the children already born were properly cared for. To compel women to bear large numbers of children for the sake of birth rate statistics was, in

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18 Usborne, *Politics* 4.


their opinion, not in the best interest of the citizenry. By the end of the first World War, the BdF had moved to the right. The Social Democrats (SPD) had also shifted focus and combined forces with the Society for the Protection of Mothers (Bund für Mutterschutz) to implement welfare and incentive programs for mothers and pregnant women and to expand insurance benefits.

In 1927, the German government became the first among major industrialized countries to ratify and implement the Washington Convention of 1919 which, at least on paper, afforded job security to pregnant women and new mothers and mandated longer maternity leave. However, domestic servants as well as home and agricultural workers were not covered, and many women who were covered could not afford the wage reduction during an extended leave. By continuing to work, often until the day of delivery, they not only had more complications with their pregnancies, but also contributed to an environment that made it harder for other women to avail themselves of the benefits. An additional factor in the pressure to work longer was the large number of unemployed workers waiting to fill vacancies.

Other legislation passed during this time improved the legal status of illegitimate children. The aim of the BfM in pushing for this legislation was to secure for illegitimate children the same rights as full members of society that legitimate children enjoyed. In doing so, they also improved infant health and the condition and status of the children's mothers. This latter effect also expanded at least

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21 Usborne, Politics 48-50.
somewhat the definition of acceptable sexual behavior for women. However, to many people in all walks of society, this suggested “free love” which, according to Allen, “provoked a mixture of fascination and horror.”\textsuperscript{23} The BfdM, to be sure, was interested in improving society's respect for and support of traditional and non-traditional motherhood as well as advocating reproductive freedom. But David Crew points out that the SPD's motivation was to increase its numbers by raising a new generation of socialist supporters rather than recruiting new members from displaced agricultural workers who had only recently moved to the industrialized cities.\textsuperscript{24} It is somewhat ironic that the SPD logic corresponds to the pronatalist position that strength lies in numbers. It is the same stance held by conservatives that was criticized by the left for reducing the proletarian class to “cannon fodder” (Kanonenfutter) during the war.

The Communist Party demanded the outright repeal of Article 218, although conflicts with the SPD made working jointly to achieve their goals impossible. In their view, Article 218 had an inordinate impact on working class families, which were least able to care for large numbers of children. The communists denied that abortion was a moral issue for proletarian women, rather that it was chosen out of

\textsuperscript{22} See Georg Lilienthal, “The illegitimacy question in Germany, 1900-1945: Areas of tension in social and population policy,” Continuity and Change 5 (1990): 249-81; see also Allen.

\textsuperscript{23} Allen 428.

financial desperation. They viewed the law as a capitalist plot to keep the factories and military staffed and the poor oppressed. While they favored women’s right to self-determination, they also placed limits on this right. The Party believed it was necessary “den Frauen das Recht zu[zu]gestehen, über sich selbst zu bestimmen, selbst zu urteilen, ob sie imstande sind, ein neues Wesen aufzuziehen, solange die Gesellschaft die Versorgung der Mutter und die Aufzucht der Kinder nicht übernehmen will.” However, limiting women’s rights in this manner makes it evident that “[t]he Marxist parties did not want to eliminate antifeminism; they wanted to use it. Their rhetoric was designed primarily to attract women voters, which was not necessarily the same as emancipating women.”

The necessity for abortion, birth control and laws protecting female workers were generally considered to be temporary measures to assist working women until the capitalist system had been abolished and a socialist state had been fully implemented. At such a time, financial need would have been eradicated and women fully integrated into the work force. According to their reasoning, it follows that women would then be more than willing to bring a sufficient amount of children into the world, rendering such laws superfluous. In keeping with this line of

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25 See also Bebel 200.

26 Bridenthal and Koonz 40.

27 Bebel remarks that overpopulation is not the cause of hunger and need in the working class, rather that an equitable distribution of wealth and food would enable and even require a larger population (601-19).
thinking, the USSR, which had legalized abortion in 1917, again enacted in 1923,\textsuperscript{28} declaring that their goals had been achieved.

It is interesting to note the similarities in the arguments of the Communist Party and especially the Protestant, but also the Catholic Church. Both the communists and the churches saw the youth in danger because of the economic difficulties of the time. They believed that the root of the decline in morals could be found in the inability of young people to marry and thus find an outlet for their natural urges for sex. Both believed that only after all had been converted to their respective doctrines and their visions of society had been fully realized would abortion no longer be a problem, because it would no longer be necessary. They both believed that once economic need ceased to be a concern, women would joyfully fulfill their duty to society and produce sufficient children. Thus, it was a battle to convert the lost youth of the nation.\textsuperscript{29}

It should not surprise us then that mostly young, single women, the traditional guardians of virtue, are the subject of most of these works. The Catholic Church allows loopholes for married couples wanting to limit the size of their families: the rhythm method is acceptable for married couples even though the church deplores any sexual relations without the willingness to accept children. But for those who feel unable to marry due to economic circumstances, there is no hope except climbing onto the bandwagon to bring about the promised salvation.

\textsuperscript{28} Usborne, \textit{Politics} 166. See also information for endnote 46 listed on page 258.

\textsuperscript{29} See also Gay.
The churches had their pulpits from which they preached their message. Socialists and especially communists used art as part of their propaganda program to mobilize the youth.

**The Authors and Their Politics**

Friedrich Wolf, Willi Bredel, Albert Hotopp, Ernst Ottwalt, and Rudolf Braune were members of the KPD, which made its opposition to Article 218 a plank in the party platform. Bredel, whose father was one of the founding members of the KPD, joined the party shortly after its founding. He wrote *Die Rosenhofstraße* while in prison for “Vorbereitung zum literarischen Hoch- und Landesverrat” for his work as the editor of the *Hamburger Volkszeitung*. Hotopp was first a member of the SPD, but moved progressively left, participating in the November revolution of 1918, joining the USPD, then in 1920 the KPD. Hotopp was imprisoned for high treason from 1923-26, then worked as a party functionary in Berlin. Ottwalt initially worked against the communist revolutionaries as a member of the *Freikorps Halle*. As a result of working in a mine and a factory while a student in Halle and Jena, he became a member of the KPD. Braune joined the Communist Party in 1928 and worked as a journalist for *Freiheit*, the party’s daily newspaper in the Rhineland-Westphalia area. He was also active in a variety of other party capacities, such as publicity and as a speaker. Hans José

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Rehfisch, the son of a physician, worked as an attorney and public prosecutor in Berlin before giving up his profession in 1923 to co-direct the *Berliner Zentraltheater*. There he worked with Erwin Piscator who wrote propaganda pieces for the KPD and later directed plays by Credé and others at his own theater, the *Piscator-Bühne*. In addition, Braune, Bredel, Hotopp, Franz Krey, Ottwalt and Wolf were all members of the Association of Proletarian-Revolutionary Writers (*Bund proletarisch-revolutionärer Schriftsteller*).\(^\text{32}\)

Bruno Schönlank was involved with the *Spartakusgruppe* during the November revolution, but during the Weimar Republic he worked for newspapers aligned with the SPD. Arnold Zweig seemed only reluctantly political, but was known for socialist leanings. Hans Fallada, the son of a judge, was not particularly politically active, although he supported the Republic and joined the SPD in 1928. He had a troubled personal life with a checkered employment history which included positions as a bookkeeper, an editor and court reporter for newspapers, and an employee of the Rowohlt publishing house. Since Fallada generally held himself out of political discourse, many critics considered his works apolitical or permeated by a false understanding of the political situation. Reinhard Zachau traces the changing critical assessment of Fallada and shows that "in der

Neutralität seiner Darstellung […] wird die politische Absicht des Autors unbewußt deutlich."

Alfred Döblin was affiliated with the Independent Socialist Party (USPD), but became a member of the more moderate SPD in 1921. He was a founding member of Gruppe 25, a group of Marxist and left-liberal writers. "[H]e saw the political function of the writer as both provocative and mediatory, 'active' and 'representative,'" and believed reform was best carried out from within the system. His election to the literary Academy in 1926 was seen as a betrayal by the Gruppe 25, which dissolved soon thereafter, and as an affront to several right-wing members of the Academy. In 1928, he co-founded the Political Action Group for Intellectual Freedom (Aktionsgemeinschaft für geistige Freiheit) in response to the passage of the Harmful Publications (Young Persons) Act (Gesetz zur Bewahrung der Jugend vor Schund- und Schmutzschriften) in 1926. Rehfisch, Zweig and

33 Reinhard K. Zachau, Hans Fallada als politischer Schriftsteller, American University Studies I, Germanic Languages and Literature 83 (New York: Lang, 1990) 36; "in the neutrality of his portrayal […] the political intent of the author becomes unconsciously clear."


36 Alter 48-49.
Schönlank were among the members of the Writers' Union who served on the indexing boards to prevent the law from being abused. 37 In addition, Döblin was trained as a psychiatrist, but later also became a research associate for internal medicine. In 1911 he opened an insurance practice (Kassenpraxis) in Berlin. 38

Friedrich Wolf and Carl Credé were physicians as well as members of the Association of Socialist Physicians (Verein sozialistischer Ärzte). Throughout the war, Wolf served as a military doctor, first in the field and then in a reserve hospital. After the war he held a position as city doctor (Stadtarzt) for the industrial city of Remscheid, where he opened counselling centers for mothers (Mütterberatungsstellen) and worked a great deal with infants and children. In 1921-26 and again starting in 1927 he had practices for homeopathic medicine. Wolf also wrote a book, Die Natur als Arzt und Helfer, which was a homeopathic guide popular among workers. 39 He was actually associated with the more moderate SPD in the early 1920s rather than the radical USPD to which he claimed to belong, 40 but he joined the KPD in 1928 and was deeply involved with the movement to reform the abortion laws.

37 Petersen 514-16.


In an infamous case, Wolf and another physician, Else Kienle, were arrested in 1931 and charged with allegedly performing abortions for profit, the most serious offense under Article 218. Wolf was released the next day because of massive public pressure. Dr. Kienle, however, was detained for two months and released after a hunger strike.

There is no evidence to show that Frank Armau, Vicki Baum, or Irmgard Keun were politically active. Armau was a journalist, for a time covering the court and police beat and even working with the New York murder commission from 1925-26. He was also a consultant to the Deutsche Bank, Daimler-Benz and the board of directors for the Adlerwerke. But the very fact that their characters seek an abortion constitutes a political act, even though Baum's Helene and Keun's Gilgi do not go through with it. As will be discussed later in greater detail, Fallada's Lämmchen, Helene, and Gilgi are the only women who continue their pregnancies and keep their babies. However, Baum's and Keun's characters do so outside the accepted social framework for motherhood -- they do so as unwed mothers.

*Neue Sachlichkeit* and Political Literature

_*Neue Sachlichkeit* (New Objectivity) has generally been considered a middle-class art form which arose during the inter-war phase of economic stabilization in the mid-1920s. The abstract utopian hysterics of the Expressionists cooled. The call now was for "Nichts mehr von Krieg und Revolution und Weltzerlösung! Laßt uns bescheiden sein und uns anderen, kleineren Dingen zuwenden." The

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41 Attributed to Paul Kornfeld; quoted in Helmut Lethen, *Neue Sachlichkeit 1924-1932: Studien zur Literatur des "Weißen Sozialismus"* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1970) 3;
focus shifted from revolution to every-day life, the style from declamatory to realistic.

These smaller things were documented and examined in the literary works. The novels are written from an objective distance; their language is accessible, dialogue dominates over description, the narration stays close to the surface, not straying far from a record of events. Indeed, the fictionalized events involving the inner workings of the German justice system in Ernst Ottwalt’s novel Denn sie wissen, was sie tun are based on accounts taken from actual court cases. In the forward to his novel, the author even invites any doubting readers to write to the publisher for “Offenlegung des Tatsachenmaterials, auf das sich die fraglichen Stellen stützen,” should the “truth” seem stranger than fiction.

Gilgi -- eine von uns is a notable exception. Keun uses inner monologue extensively to reflect the main character’s emotional state. At the beginning of the novel, Gilgi is the quintessential New Woman -- capable, determined, practical, rational. In the narrator’s third person descriptions of Gilgi, she is shown to be self-assured and aware of who she is. Her thoughts progress rapidly from one topic to the next: a washing list, a line from a song, a foreign phrase, an adage; but she is always conscious of her next step. As she grows ever more dependent on her boyfriend, Martin, her thought process changes, too. What began as rapid-fire

“Nothing more about war and revolution and saving the world! Let’s be modest and turn our attention to other, smaller things.”

42 Ottwalt 8; “disclosure of the documentary material on which the passages in question are based.”
reminders become aimless, meandering fragments. Hers is a battle against irrationality and chaos, and in the end she draws on her logical thinking and practical skills to pull herself back to reality. Despite this concentration on the personal, Keun firmly embeds the novel in the “significant social and political forces of the time, without ever having her characters engage in abstract intellectual discussions.”

The style of most of the plays was seen as a return to Naturalism. Thomas Koebner names Wolf’s Cyankali, as well as works by Crede and Rehfsisch, as examples of Neue Sachlichkeit’s period plays, or, as he prefers, the “Debatten- und Reportagestück.” The difference between Naturalism and Neue Sachlichkeit, he says, lies in the shift in blame for circumstances from the personal to the social; instead of nature being responsible, it is the rich who are at fault for the miserable conditions reproduced on the stage. Wolf uses familiar principles of the tragedy to structure Cyankali: “seine unausweichliche Konsequenz, seine aufwührende Tragik, die bis zum letzten und äußersten geht, die Zwangsläufigkeit unerhörter Steigerung, in der jede Szene, jeder Dialog, jede Gestalt ihren notwendigen Platz haben [...].”

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45 Jehser (68) quotes Walther Pöllatschek, Friedrich Wolf. Eine Biographie 120; “its unavoidable consequences, its stirring tragedy that goes to the last and most extreme, the
Döblin's *Die Ehe*, however, represents the movement away from Aristotelean theater. *Die Ehe* is a multi-media event, drawing on innovations by the director Erwin Piscator and elements of "Agitprop" troupes. The three major sections, "die junge Ehe," "die große Familie" and "die bürgerliche Ehe," can be arranged in any order, similar to sketches in a cabaret or revue show. Statistics, ads, text, pictures and film footage flash on a screen. A narrator and chorus comment on the plot between and during scenes. Music supports the action. The stage, however, is bare with the exception of a few necessary pieces of furniture. While the characters in Döblin's play call each other by their names, they are listed under the dramatis personae only as types: Mann, Frau, Arzt, indicating that the piece has general relevance. P.V. Brady points to the affinity of revue plays with commedia dell' arte, particularly in the use of familiar stock characters.

The realism we see in these works represents more than a reproduction of reality. Works with documentary elements "rechnen mit einer liberalen Öffentlichkeit, in der der 'Skandal der Tatsachen' etwas in Bewegung setzen würde. [...] [S]ie hielten fast alle fest an der Idee eines Publikums räsonierender

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47 Brady 115-116.
Bürger, die angesichts der dargestellten Verfassungswirklichkeit zu dem Consensus kommen, daß etwas geändert werden müsse.⁴⁸

Although documentary works were criticized for believing it was sufficient merely to depict facts without commentary,⁴⁹ a process is implied which is similar to a main concern of communist propaganda pieces: "how to make art an instrument of social and political change."⁵⁰ Friedrich Wolf, in his essay, "Kunst ist Waffe!" calls upon authors to follow in the steps of Émile Zola, Leo Tolstoy and Harriet Beecher-Stowe, among others, who acted as the social conscience and "griffen mit ein in den Gegenwartskampf dieser Tage."⁵¹ Willi Bredel saw his novels as an integral part of the struggle for socialism and against fascism, as "Nebenprodukte der Parteiarbeit."⁵² In the forward to the second of his Gequälte Menschen plays, Credé states, "Mein Theaterstück soll zur Diskussion stellen, ob unsere Gesetze alle noch modern sind, ob sie noch brauchbar sind, ob sie nicht

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⁴⁸ Lethen 100-101; "counted on a liberal public in which the 'scandal of facts' would set something in motion. [...] They depended on the idea of an audience of reasoning citizens who, in view of the presented reality, would come to the consensus that something had to change."


⁵⁰ Brady 111.

⁵¹ Friedrich Wolf, "Kunst ist Waffe! Eine Feststellung" Dramen (1928; Frankfurt/Main: Röderberg, 1979) 436; "engage in the prevailing battle of our time."

⁵² "Biographie" 160; "by-product of party work."
verbessert werden müssen." While he disavows making a personal call to action, he affirms that "[d]er Inhalt des Stückes fordert zum Kampf gegen Überheblichkeit und Willkür auf."

The authors went about documenting reality as they saw it and convincing readers and viewers of their version of reality in a strikingly similar way. They chose what they believed were typical cases and, in most cases, portrayed women they believed suffered most from the law. In order to come to some conclusions about the reasons behind this similarity, I shall look closely at the women in the works who seek abortions.

**Typical Characteristics of Abortion-Seekers**

Sabine Schroeder-Krassnow, in her analysis of Wolf's *Cyankali* and Zweig's *Junge Frau*, outlines some typical characteristics of fictional women seeking an abortion. According to Schroeder-Krassnow, the woman tends to be unmarried; she comes from the lower end of the social scale and becomes pregnant by her boyfriend who is usually her social peer; she has no money of her own and thus faces many obstacles in finding someone to perform the operation, and she often dies from an infection stemming from an illegal abortion. While many of these

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53 Credé 4; "My play is intended to raise the question whether all our laws are still current, whether they are still serviceable, whether they need to be improved."

54 Credé 6; "[t]he subject of this play summons [us] to the fight against arrogance and arbitrariness."

characteristics, in addition to others she discusses, are valid for many of the
women in the other works, some female characters do not fit the mold. In fact,
only Hete in Cyankali fits all these characteristics exactly. In this section I shall
expand on her generalizations to contextualize them and to include other works
written at the same time before situating them in relation to the mass phenomenon
of the New Woman that pervaded Weimar culture in the section that follows.

Exceptions to the Rule

Döblin’s Guste in Die Ehe, Schönlank’s Ema in Verfluchter Segen and
Credé’s Frau Nolte in Gegüälte Menschen are married. Guste wants an abortion
because her husband has just lost his job. Frau Nolte and Ema already have
children: Frau Nolte has eight, five to six of which are living at home in their one-
room apartment, and Ema has two on whom “die Knochen zum Halse rausste-
hen.” Although Zweig’s Lenore Wahl (her last name is symbolic of the choice
she must make) comes from an affluent, middle-class family, she has no money at
her disposal; her money is set aside for her dowry. And Rehfisch’s Lotte in Der
Frauenarzt has no trouble finding a doctor, since her close acquaintance, Dr.
Fechner, is a former gynecologist who had already been in trouble with the law for
performing abortions.

The fathers-to-be in the works by Amau, Braune, Hotopp, and Ottwalt,
following in the tradition of the Storm and Stress scenario, are all of a higher social
class than the women they get pregnant. Juscha in Amau’s Gesetz, das tötet is a

56 Schönlank 19; “the bones are sticking out all over.”
Zwangsmieterin\textsuperscript{57} and has an affair with Kommerzienrat Dominique, who owns the house; his wife, on the other hand, becomes pregnant by a young man she met on a ski trip. Lenchen in Ottwald’s \textit{Denn sie wissen, was sie tun}, the daughter of a clerk, becomes pregnant by Friedrich Wilhelm Dickmann, a law student and the son of a sitting judge. Although Lenchen is a minor character in the novel, the episode becomes a defining moment in the life of the future judge. It is the first time he is directly confronted with the contradiction between his belief in the intrinsic impartiality of laws and the injustice inherent in the class structure and exemplified by his own actions (actually his inaction). Trude in Braune’s \textit{Mädchen an der Orga Privat}, becomes pregnant by her married boss who is also having an affair with at least one other woman in the steno pool. The widow Lee Tews in Hotopp’s \textit{Fischkutter H.F. 13} owns her own fishing boat, but is a member of the dying breed of independent workers. She makes the transformation to a subordinate role complete when she takes out a loan on her fishing boat and then has an affair with the man who holds the lien. Martin, in Keun’s \textit{Gilgi}, is a unique case. He had a considerable amount of money, but spent most of it traveling. He invested what he had left and receives interest payments of 200 Mark a month (the average gross salary for a typist at the time was about 120-130 Mark), enough to live comfortably, particularly since he was living rent-free. Still, he lives beyond his means, which is a source of concern for Gilgi, who, in her typically middle-class manner, tries to bring his chaotic finances into order.

\textsuperscript{57} “Zwangsmieter” were recipients of an inter-war housing program which assigned displaced persons to spare rooms in private homes.
The major exceptions to the prototype Schroeder-Krassnow describes lie in either the failure to obtain an abortion or in the success of surviving it. Under the law, none of the abortions could be performed legally. Fallada’s Lämmchen, Keun’s Gilgi and Baum’s Helene are unable to obtain an abortion, but not for lack of trying. Lämmchen marries the “little man” Pinneberg after “der berühmte Doktor Sesam, von dem die halbe Stadt und die viertel Provinz flüstern, daß er ein weites Herz hat, manche sagen auch, ein gutes Herz,”\textsuperscript{58} refuses to perform an abortion. After going to a doctor who is too expensive and a midwife whose previous patient dies leading to her arrest, Helene and her boyfriend, Rainer, make a pact to commit suicide. Helene backs out at the last minute, but Rainer goes through with it, leaving her to fend for herself and the baby. She suffers discrimination in her work and in obtaining housing and must overcome other hardships because of her illegitimate, fatherless child. Gilgi argues with her doctor and is about to give up when he consents to examine her again in three weeks. By then, however, she has lost her job and almost lost herself in the destructive relationship with Martin.

Only seven of the 16 female characters survive their abortions, and four of these are prosecuted and convicted. Rehfisch’s Lotte survives because she knew an experienced, though no longer practicing gynecologist, a doctor who lost his practice for performing illegal abortions. Zweig’s Lenore came through because her brother helped her find a midwife and a doctor willing, for a price, to perform the operation safely and to provide follow-up care. Amau’s Lu Dominique-

\textsuperscript{58} Fallada 10; “the famous Dr. Sesam, about whom half the city and a quarter of the province whisper that he has a big heart, some even say a good heart.”
Vanderstratten and Else Merten both survive their abortions, the former because of her wealth and superb connections to the best clinics in Berlin, the latter because her father found her hemorrhaging and called a doctor who got her to a hospital before she bled to death. Like Else, Krey's Maria and Hotopp's Lee Tews also get medical attention in time. Hospitalization for all three directly leads to their prosecution. Bredel's Trudel Merker, on the other hand, is found out as the result of rampant gossip. She was seen by one of her neighbors going into the apartment of a woman whose immediate neighbors were in on the open secret of her profession. The information was passed on to Trudel's neighbor, connections were made, and the police were soon knocking on her door.

These numbers paint a dismal picture of the chances women confronted with unwanted pregnancies faced. One might be tempted to conclude that these stories are meant to deter women from having abortions, much as the public display of child murderesses was intended to do in the 18th century. But analogous to the literature of the Storm and Stress period, these are not morality pieces. These pieces put practical considerations ahead of moral reproaches. They are arguments for safe, legal, and affordable abortions for women who cannot afford to have (more) children.

The works are filled with minor characters and with references to the many women who have survived abortions. All the works bring up statistics at one point or another: how many women have abortions, how many die of illegal operations, how many prosecutions, etc. But there is no point in checking the numbers against official statistics. In the first place, the numbers changed from year to year
and differed according to the source of the studies and the ideology behind them. Furthermore, the so-called Dunkelziffer of unreported, successful abortions, was generally conceded to be high but was also hotly debated. Adding to the Dunkelziffer were the “false miscarriages” or the abortions listed as miscarriages by doctors who falsified records to keep a woman from being prosecuted either by previous arrangement, as in Zweig's novel, or after the fact. Whether a doctor was willing to do this depended on his or her convictions, but also on locality. There was generally a higher incidence of falsified records in the northern part of the country.\(^{59}\)

What can be agreed on is that a large number of women had illegal abortions and that the vast majority were successful. This, in turn, makes the trend clear that women wanted fewer children. Abortion and contraception made it possible for women to delay marriage, delay having children, or have a smaller family. All of these reasons had their roots in the changes occurring in society. The continuing transition from agrarian to urban life made smaller families necessary, particularly in view of the cramped living space of city apartments that proletarians and even the middle-class could afford. Inflation and the Depression stretched meager incomes to the breaking point; smaller families thus had a better chance of surviving intact.

Sprinkling the works with statistics serves several purposes. The statistics heighten the documentary effect of the work, since they are the same (or similar)

\(^{59}\) The phenomenon continued in the post-war period and is generally attributed to the greater influence of the Catholic Church in southern Germany.
to those the audience hears and reads from other sources, be it official media sources, the grapevine or even personal experience. Based on these statistics, several works contend that a law that is not enforced cancels itself out and they call for the abolition of an ineffectual law.

Absent Fathers-to-Be

Another factor common to most of the women is the fact that they are going through this trying time without the emotional support of the babies' fathers. As Schroeder-Krassnow points out for Cyankali, Hete's boyfriend Paul sees her pregnancy not as his personal problem, but as a societal one. He therefore places the blame for her death squarely with a society in which a doctor refuses to perform a safe abortion for a woman in financial need. In his behalf, it must be said that he tried to help Hete by wresting the syringe from Prosnik, the building superintendent who tried to extort sexual favors from Hete in return for his help, but Paul shied away from helping her use it. His reluctance left her to do it herself. This resulted in a chain of events leading to her overdosing on potassium cyanide, or Cyankali, that she obtained from a midwife.\(^{60}\) Similarly, after the death of Döblin's Guste, the doctor who had earlier refused her request for an abortion argues with the midwife about who is to blame. Guste's husband, Karl says, "Nu schimpft euch mal aus, ihr beeden, was hab ick davon, mein Geld hats gekostet. Euch sollt man alle

\(^{60}\) Potassium cyanide is an extremely strong poison. Presumably, taking a small dose would kill the fetus before it killed the mother. Similarly functioning remedies made of compounds based on arsenic, phosphorus, lead and other metals were also manufactured since the 19th century (Hagemann, Frauenzucht 102).
totschlagen."\(^{61}\) That his wife is dead is apparently less important than the money they spent trying to circumvent the system that killed her.

Bertin of *Junge Frau von 1914* did his best to obtain the money for Lenore before his unit is deployed. But he is so preoccupied with his experiences of the war that, when they see each other again, he cuts off her attempts to broach the subject of her abortion. It is her brother who makes inquiries and arranges for a midwife to induce a miscarriage and for discrete follow-up care in a hospital. She harbors a resentment about Bertin’s emotional abandonment even after they are married. Although Maria’s boyfriend, Erich, in Krey’s *Maria und der Paragraph* helped pay for the abortion, he did not visit her in the hospital and later becomes annoyed when her recovery is slower than expected and she cannot resume normal activities -- leisure and sexual. He blames her for not wanting to get better, saying: “Wenn man sich so hängen läßt wie du, kann man auch nicht gesund werden!”\(^{62}\) and tries to manipulate her emotions by accusing her of no longer loving him. The real reason for her slow recovery was an infection that developed as a consequence of the abortion. Friedrich Wilhelm Dickmann, a law student and future judge in Ottwalt’s *Denn sie wissen, was sie tun*, asks a fraternity brother studying medicine for help when Lench, the daughter of a local civil servant, tells him of her pregnancy. The medical student answers, “Was ist denn nun wirklich

\(^{61}\) Döblin 199; “You two can tell each other off, but what good does it do me? It was my money. Someone should kill all of you off.”

\(^{62}\) Krey 38; “When you let yourself mope around like you do, you can’t expect to get well!”
schon dabei, wenn so ein Mädel ein uneheliches Kind kriegt?" He then proceeds to turn the situation around to absolve Dickmann of any feelings of responsibility:

Ist das Mädchen vielleicht etwa Jungfrau gewesen, als er sie kennenlernte? Na also! Hat sie denn nicht schon früher Liebeschaften mit Studenten gehabt? Ist Dickmann überhaupt der Vater des Kindes? ... Du lieber Gott, ein kleines Bürgermädchen, das auf dem Tanzboden in Lobeda verkehrt. Im Grunde durch und durch verdorben.63

Dickmann then leaves town for the semester break without giving Lenchen another thought and learns of her death after a self-induced abortion only on returning to town for the new term.

Arnau's Juscha, Hotopp's Lee Tews, Rehfsch's Lotte, and Keun's Gilgi do not even tell the fathers of their pregnancy. Juscha and Lee Tews had ended their affairs with men who controlled an aspect of their lives and did not wish to complicate matters with a discussion on what to do about the pregnancy. In Rehfsch's Der Frauenarzt, Lotte has broken off her relationship with Losch, the child's father, in favor of someone with better financial prospects, and has to keep the abortion secret from both. When Losch later learns of her abortion, he blackmails her and the doctor. Gilgi, on the other hand, knows it would make matters worse if Martin knew.

Da zerbricht vielleicht etwas, wenn er's erfährt. Vielleicht nimmt er's furchtbar leicht -- das erträgt man nicht. Vielleicht ist er hilflos und der Sache gar nicht gewachsen -- das erträgt man nicht. Vielleicht würde er sich verpflichtet und gezwungen fühlen, sein ganzes Leben

63 Ottwalt 44; "What's the big deal if a girl like that has an illegitimate child?" "Was the girl even a virgin when he met her? Well then! Didn't she have flings with students before? ... Dear God, a little bourgeois girl who hangs out at the dance hall in Lobeda. In reality, completely depraved."
umzustellen -- todunlücklich würde er dann werden und ich auch. Widerlich ist die ganze Geschichte. Ja, wenn man Martin nur ein bißchen weniger lieb hätte, dann wäre alles viel einfacher.\textsuperscript{64}

Trudel Merker, a sales clerk who lives in a working-class neighborhood in Bredel's Rosenhofstraße, does not reveal the identity of her child's father. When her friend, Else, to whom she has turned for advice, asks what her boyfriend thinks about the situation, she replies, "Ich . . . ich habe keinen Freund!"\textsuperscript{65} Else is proud to be able to step in and use her connections in the Communist Party to obtain the name of a midwife who will help Trudel. Ironically, Else, who later becomes pregnant and decides to keep her child, receives little support from the father of her child, either. Her boyfriend, who moved into a room in her family's apartment to help them financially, is much too involved with party activities to do more than pay a quick visit to her in the hospital after the child is born. He also begrudges her this visit because it causes him to be late for a meeting with his party friends.

From these examples we can see that pregnancy is still \textit{eine Fraensache}. It is a woman's problem to deal with on her own without possessing the power to make her own decisions. The men are shown to be eager to have the problem taken care of. They are concerned more with money than their wives' or girlfriends' welfare, if they are interested at all.

\textsuperscript{64} Keun 177; "Something will break if he finds out. Maybe he'd take it really well -- I couldn't stand that. Maybe he'd feel helpless and not up to it at all -- I couldn't stand that. Maybe he'd feel obligated and forced to change his whole life around -- he'd be completely miserable and so would I. This whole thing is awful. If I only loved Martin a little bit less, everything would be so much easier."

\textsuperscript{65} Bredel 18; "I . . . I don't have a boyfriend!"
Sex Education

Like Wendla Bergmann, who does not understand how she could be preg-
nant if she is not married and then asks: "O Mutter, warum hast du mir nicht alles
gesagt!" most of the women are sadly uninformed about gynecological matters.
Sex, as a taboo subject, was not spoken about even in families who lived in such
close quarters that intercourse could not be kept private. No sex education was
offered in schools. It is relatively easy to forgive Pinneberg for confusing "Pessare"
and "Pessoirs [sic]," and not to fault Lämmchen, who is pregnant for the first
time, for only belatedly recognizing frequent urination and nausea in the morning
as symptoms of early pregnancy -- "Wer denkt denn gleich an so was?" Hete
managed to lay her hands on a gynecological syringe, but, understandably, has no
idea how to use it. Yet it is quite surprising how Trude in Das Mädchen an der
Orga Privat manages to keep her pregnancy from her co-workers for so long.
Shown by Heinrich von Kleist in Die Marquise von O... and by Theodor Fontane in
Schach von Wuthenow, the fainting spells Trude suffers from are a well-known
foreshadowing technique to signal pregnancy. Here it has the added effect of
underscoring the young women's inexperience and lack of basic information about
their own biological functions despite the sophisticated air these New Women have

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66 Wedekind III.5; "O, Mother, why didn’t you tell me everything!"
67 See also Bebel 194.
68 Fallada 10.
69 Fallada 13: "Who thinks of something like that right away?"
adopted. Baum’s Helene also faints in the lab at the beginning of her pregnancy. She fears she might be pregnant but her patronizing colleagues, knowing that the chemicals she was working with would not cause her to faint, ascribe the spell to “hysterische Weibergeschichten.”

Particularly for the single women in these works, the examination confirming their pregnancy is usually the first time they have ever been to a gynecologist, and they experience feelings of violation. Pinneberg hears Lämmchen crying “Nein!” and “O Gott!” during her examination. When she comes back into the room, “...sie hat große Augen, wie von einem Schreck erweitert.” Compounding the violation in Helene’s case, the first exam by a medical school drop-out is accompanied by unwanted sexual advances.

Zweig’s Lenore and Baum’s Helene best exemplify the complete lack of sex education available to young women at that time. Although both Helene and Lenore are educated women pursuing university studies, they must turn to inadequate family medical handbooks and other people for the information they lack: “Unsereiner weiß die primitivsten Dinge nicht.” Helene’s first reaction when she realizes she is pregnant is to try to induce a miscarriage by repeatedly doing belly flops into a pool from the high diving board. A discussion with a nurse on the

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70 Baum 95; “a hysterical female condition.”

71 Fallada 11; “her eyes were wide as if she had had a shock.”

72 Baum 127-28.

73 Baum 99; “People like us don’t even know the most primitive things.”
obstetrics and gynecological ward in Krey's Maria und der Paragraph also illustrates women's frustration with their own ignorance. The nurse chastises modern women for their inability to negotiate their way in the modern world. This prompts Maria's comment: "Die hat gut reden. Die weiß, wie man es machen muß!" The "es" to which Maria refers could mean causing a miscarriage, but it could also simply mean how not to get pregnant. In either case, Maria knows that knowledge is power and that it is something she lacks. She lacks it because it is being withheld from her.

Even condoms, available to men at any barber shop, as Bertin states in Junge Frau, were considered "articles intended for indecent use" and thus were barred from being publicly displayed or advertised under the Pornography Act of 1900. Condoms were also prohibitively expensive for the working class to use consistently. Female contraceptives available then required a fitting by a physician, and many women were reluctant to discuss such matters with their doctors, most of whom were men. Counselling centers, run by sex reform organizers such as Magnus Hirschfeld, were available in large cities, but specific information on contraceptives could not be distributed to the general public. Krey shows the fate of one of the centers at the hands of the National Socialists. The authors avoid specific discussions of contraceptive methods other than the com-

74 Krey 63; "That's east for her to say. She knows how to do it!"

75 Zweig 64.
ment that one must be or had thought one had been "careful." Presumably, more precise information would also be cause for prosecution under the law.

Another explanation for these women's unfamiliarity with reproductive matters lies in young women's rejection of the lives their mothers led which revolved around raising children and tending the house. In looking at Frühlings Erwachen and at Cyankali, Schroeder-Krassnow concludes that turning to their mothers for help is common. However, most of the women in the works under consideration here do not. By breaking away from the traditional roles of mother and nurturer, which in the case of Keun's Gilgi, Braune's Erna and Baum's Helene also entailed moving away from home, they also lost access to a traditional source of information. But even the women who live at home -- Krey's Maria, Amau's Juscha, Zweig's Lenore -- are unable to turn to their mothers because their choice of career over marriage has alienated them from the older generation.

The Medical Profession

The conversations the women have with the doctors and midwives are very similar to each other and use stock phrases representative of the various political viewpoints. The conservative doctors remind the women of their duty to the country, remark that the country needs soldiers, say that only God makes such

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77 Erna moved from a small village in the country to take a secretarial job in Berlin and Helene, whose parents are both dead, leaves her step-mother -- a double-alienation -- to study at a university.
decisions. However, as Usborne points out, the motives of such doctors were split between ideological convictions and their desire to secure the abortion business for themselves. They had a vested interest in barring non-physicians, i.e. midwives and lay practitioners, from performing abortions and quacks from peddling abortificants to correct “delays” and “irregularities” in a woman’s menstrual cycle, ranging from traditional herbs such as mugwort, parsley and rue to the exotic remedy with its secret ingredients Guste purchased in Die Ehe.\textsuperscript{78} By doing so they could not only raise their status by claiming the safety factor, but could also improve themselves financially by increasing the volume of patients.\textsuperscript{79} The more pragmatically oriented fictional doctors are afraid that the woman cannot keep it a secret, they say nothing can be done because the mother is healthy, that they face prison if caught. Not even when the women appeal to the doctors’ sense of responsibility to help their patients or when they promise to fulfill societal obligations by having children at a later time, that is, when they can afford them or are married, can move the doctors. Some doctors refuse out of principle and others if the woman is considered untrustworthy or, as in Helene’s case, unable to pay the fee. The women are told to accept their fate and to adjust to the circumstances. Helene and Ema (on behalf of Trude) even go to a female doctor, thinking she might be more sympathetic. But Usborne shows us that women

\textsuperscript{78} Döblin 192.

\textsuperscript{79} Usborne, Politics 156-201.
doctors were no more unified in their stances on the issue than the general population.\textsuperscript{80}

As formulaic as these conversations appear, they are prime examples of how not to go about obtaining an abortion. Zweig's Lenore makes an appointment with a doctor whose name she got from a girlfriend who used him for her abortion. Lenore stresses how healthy she is, thinking that the promise of a speedy recovery is what the doctor wants to hear.\textsuperscript{81} If she had instead fabricated symptoms of a problem pregnancy that would endanger her life, the procedure would have been performed immediately with medical justification. Her case would have been among the many "false miscarriages." Lenore is also too timid, or too naive, to use the only real weapon she has -- the knowledge that this doctor had performed an illegal abortion for a friend. The threat of exposure may have forced the doctor to help Lenore.

It is apparent that this doctor is willing to help if the correct lines are delivered in this play of appearances. He tells Lenore, albeit in an elliptical manner, what to say to allow him to follow procedures:

\begin{quote}
Im dritten [Monat] löst sich das Ei manchmal durch körperliche Erschütterungen von selber ab. Sie merken das an Blutungen, Fräulein. Dann muß natürlich sofort ausgekratzt werden, sonst
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{80} Usborne, \textit{Politics} 191-201. See also Atina Grossmann, "Berliner Ärztinnen und Volksgesundheit in der Weimarer Republik: Zwischen Sexualreform und Eugenik," \textit{Unter allen Umständen, Frauengeschichte(n) in Berlin}, eds. Christiane Eifert and Susanne Rouette (Berlin: Rotation, 1986) 183-217. Grossmann goes to great pains to present female physicians as a unified front against §218. Dissenting voices are not presented.

\textsuperscript{81} Zweig 106ff.
gehen Sie uns an Sepsis ein. . . . Dann rufen Sie mich gleich an. Es ist also noch nicht alles verloren.92

He throws her a Rettungsleine which she does not grasp because she is stunned at not having succeeded with her plan; and she is therefore unable to understand his suggestive obliqueness.

Gilgi also tries various approaches with her doctor. After informing her she is two months pregnant and healthy with good hip structure, she tries the direct approach. She states she does not want the child and asks him to perform an abortion. He reacts with indignation. She considers feigning helpless, but cannot bring herself to do it. Instead she tells him, calmly and rationally, "[E]s ist doch das Unmoralischste und Unhygienischste und Absurdeste, eine Frau ein Kind zur Welt bringen zu lassen, das sie nicht ernähren kann. Es ist darüberhinaus überhaupt das Unmoralischste und Absurdeste, eine Frau ein Kind kriegen zu lassen, wenn sie es nicht haben will."93 Eventually, he tells her to return in three weeks, hinting that if she had not already miscarried, he might be able to help it along.

Those who know how to deal with delicate matters, such as Arnau's Lu Dominique-Vanderstratten, go about it in a much different way. Lu and her husband, Kommerzienrat Dominique, have an open marriage -- at least on her part

92 Zweig 110; "In the third [month], the egg sometimes detaches on its own from jolts to the body. You'd notice some bleeding then, Miss. In that case, you'd naturally have to have it scraped out; otherwise you could die of infection. . . . If that happens, call me immediately. You see, it's not all hopeless."

93 Keun 176; "It's the most immoral and most unhygienic and most absurd thing to have a woman bring a child into the world that she cannot feed. Moreover, it is the most immoral and most absurd thing of all to let a woman have a child when she does not want it."
-- and she spends most of her time traveling between ski resorts. A relationship
with a man she met while on one of her vacations "ist -- nicht ohne Folgen
gelieben,"84 and she has returned to Berlin for discreet medical care. She
instructs her husband on how to initiate the process:

Du mußt also zu einem der bedeutendsten Männer dieses Spezial-
faches gehen, -- und ihm annoncieren, daß ich einer klinischen
Betreuung bedarf. [. . .] Dort wird sich ganz bestimmt zeigen, daß
ich gar nicht in der Lage bin, eine Schwangerschaft durchzuhalten.
Das Weitere ergibt sich von selbst. [. . .] Du rufst [Professor]
Hubermann an, suchst ihn auf, besprichst mit ihm deine Sorgen, --
ich meine deine Wahrnehmungen auf dem Gebiete meines Befin-
dens. Also in erster Linie meine stark gesteigerte Nervosität, meine
vielfachen allgemeinen Beschwerden, Migräne, Schwächezustände,
bedenkliche Depressionen, -- so etwa die großen Umrisse, die
Ausschmückung überlasse ich deiner Phantasie.85

The actual conversation with the doctor86 follows Lu's plan exactly. Nothing
remotely illegal is said or even implied. On the contrary, the doctor expresses his
trust in the medical arts to bring a healthy child into the world. But at the same
time hestress that his colleagues would be involved with the case to serve as a
second opinion and to document the evidence in the event that a termination
becomes necessary. As Lu predicted, a thorough examination reveals previously
undetected diabetes and heart problems, and the doctor urges the Kommerzienrat

84 Arnau 37; "was -- not without consequences."

85 Arnau 43-44; "You have to go to one of the most important men in this specialty,
-- and announce that I am in need of medical attention in the hospital. [. . .] There they
will most certainly find that I am not able to carry a pregnancy to term. The rest takes care
of itself. [. . .] You call [Professor] Hubermann, pay him a visit, discuss your concerns -- I
mean your observations regarding my health. Primarily my highly increased nervousness,
my many general complaints, migraines, frail condition, serious depression, -- that's the
general outline, the embellishments are up to you."
to persuade his wife to consent to the abortion, and to be particularly gentle, since she "hängt mit zärtlicher Liebe an dem Gedanken, das Kind zur Welt zu bringen." Each party plays his or her assigned role, and the true meaning can be read only between the lines. After her two-week hospital stay, she immediately embarks on a trip to Egypt to recuperate from her ordeal. No course of treatment is mentioned for her weak heart and diabetes, and they obviously do not interfere with her travel plans.

However, sometimes not even the right words can effect the desired result, namely when the words are not backed by the appropriate amount of money.

During Helene Willfüer's visit to Professor Riemenschneider in a women's clinic in Frankfurt, she complains about irregularities in her menstrual cycle, for which the doctor recommends "einen kleinen operativen Eingriff . . ., dann ist alles wieder in Ordnung." However, his fee alone is 1000 marks and does not include the hospital costs. Helene has only 1500 to her name, with which she must also fund the rest of her studies.

Ability to pay clearly plays a role in Cyankali as well. Hete's doctor issues a medical justification certificate for a well-dressed lady and assures her that he is bound to silence by the doctor-patient privilege. He tells her that the final approval for an abortion rests with the gynecologist who will actually perform the operation.

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86 Arnau 52ff.

87 Arnau 81; "tenderly clings to the idea of bringing the child into the world."

88 Baum 129; "a little operation . . ., then everything will be back to normal."
She assures the doctor she can take care of that end of it, and adds, "Aber soll ich mir wegen eines Zufalls einen ganzen Winter verderben lassen, jetzt da ich in bester Form bin! Mein Hockeyteam in Davos erwartet mich dringend." With Hete, the doctor is impatient, demanding her insurance papers and urging her to be brief. He maintains his hands are tied by the law. He quotes the Penal Code, statistics, and, as she is walking out the door, even the Bible: "[W]enn heute alle Bindungen und Pflichten fallen, wenn man lieber in die Kinos und auf die Sportplätze rennt und die ewige Wahrheit verhöht: ‘In Schmerzen sollst du Kinder gebären . . .’” Had she been dressed better and been able to pay his fee, she would have gotten a certificate instead of a lecture.

On the whole, the doctors are shown as either greedy and willing to perform an abortion for the right price, as disagreeing with the law but being too afraid to risk their practice, or as patronizing proponents of pronatalism. By casting the fictional physicians in such a negative light, the authors criticize the system that made and continues to enforce the law. At the same time, the heroines, like their counterparts from the 18th century, are shown as victims of the same unjust system who are forced into criminal acts. Their decisions are practical and rooted in economic need, in contrast to the affluent women who abort out of convenience.

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89 Wolf 38; “But am I supposed to ruin my entire winter because of a mistake especially since I’m in top form! My hockey team is waiting for me in Davos.”

90 Wolf 42; “When today all commitments and obligations are forgotten, when people would rather go to movies and sports fields and scoff at the eternal truth ‘Thou shalt bear children in pain . . .’.”
Illegitimacy

Illegitimacy was perceived as a major social problem by politicians and clergy during the Weimar Republic. It was linked to population issues in terms of eugenics, to social issues in terms of financial support and legal status and to morality issues for obvious reasons. Most importantly, it was also linked to the abortion issue. Despite being a “solution” to the “problem” of illegitimacy, abortion was its own problem. Moral shortcomings, conservatives believed, were thus the root of both problems. As we have seen, the barriers to marriage were high due to factors such as financial hardships and demographics, and single women were not content to remain celibate. However, neither single parenthood nor abortion were sanctioned solutions for women whose relationships resulted in an illegitimate pregnancy.

While illegitimacy factors into the vast majority of the fictional pregnancies under discussion here, it is virtually ignored as an issue by most of the authors. Perhaps under the influence of Bebel, who argues for the acceptance of sex as a normal, healthy part of life, not necessarily connected to procreation, the authors chose to portray it as such by glossing over the morality question and focusing instead on the issue of poverty. It is Baum, Fallada, and Keun, authors who were either not or only loosely connected to socialist movements, who deal directly with the question of illegitimacy in their works.

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91 Bebel 155-60, 585-91.
Fallada legitimizes the child prior to its birth by having Pinneberg and Lämmchen marry. This is the conventional, socially acceptable solution, but one that is not possible or feasible for Helene or Gilgi. Fallada then explores the consequences of this decision and the disastrous effects the economic crisis has on this representative family, which had to make compromises in order to "do the right thing." What should have been a conventional middle-class family slips even below the level of proletarian families and turns into one with the reverse of society's traditional roles: a working mother and a stay-at-home father. This represents a disgrace for bourgeois Pinneberg, but for Lämmchen, with her working-class background, it is simply what one does to survive. Bourgeois morality and conventions are shown to contribute to the breakdown of the traditional family instead of strengthening it.

Baum's Helene and Keun's Gilgi must deal with illegitimacy directly. While Helene is willing to undergo an abortion, she is deterred by the cost of a clinic and by a close call with the police who arrested the midwife she was about to go to. After Rainer's suicide and her rejecting suicide, she decides to keep the child. Adoption is not considered, since there were no formal channels for it at that time. She finishes her doctorate, but is never considered for major positions as a chemist because she is a woman. She manages to find a low-paying position and a cheap place to live. In a melodramatic ending to the novel, she marries her former professor, who has since divorced his superficial socialite wife. Her child

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92 Clergymen facilitated most adoptions on an informal basis. Helene, however, does not attend a church nor does she seek the counsel of clergy.
can then be adopted by her husband and enjoy the rights of a legitimate child. Helene is shown as a capable woman who is able to achieve a modicum of success or at least to earn a living not only in a man's world but also in a male-dominated profession. Despite this positive portrayal of Helene, marriage is portrayed as the sentimental salvation of the single mother.

Gilgi's first reaction is also to seek an abortion, although after her appointment she admits that she would like to keep the baby: "ja, jetzt ist Frühling und -- ich glaube, ich bin verrückt, aber ich möchte das Kind eigentlich gern bekommen." After losing her job, she slips into lethargy. She meets up again with old friends, who, in a situation similar to the Pinnebergs, are desperately trying to survive with their two young children and a third on the way. She has good intentions of facilitating an abortion for Hertha and helping to repay money Hans embezzled, but Martin's jealousy makes her arrive too late. Hans and Hertha have killed themselves and their children. Realizing that she and Martin, should she stay with him, could suffer a similar fate, she concludes she must again take responsibility for her own life and that of her child. She leaves Cologne for Berlin to start again.

Breaking With the Stereotype

Despite all that Guste, Ema Schanz and Frau Nolte have in common with the other women, only Döblin, Schönlank and Credé break with the stereotype of a single woman as their main character who has an illegitimate child. As polls of

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93 Keun 180; "yes, it's spring now and -- I'm probably crazy, but I'd really like to keep the baby."
gynecologists in the 1920s indicated and the government was well aware, the majority of women seeking abortions by this time were married and sought abortions to limit the size of their families because of unemployment, low wages, and lack of adequate housing.

Carl Credé's *Gequälte Menschen* shows a large, working-class family living in deplorable conditions. Middle-class sympathies may dwindle because of the mother's acceptance of the two older daughters' life-styles -- one is a prostitute, the other a maid who is not married and has been convicted of having an abortion -- and the juxtaposition of a (childless) couple whose apartment across the hall is better maintained. However, Frau Nolte is shown to be a hard-working mother, and the neighbors to be snobby and condescending. When she finds she is pregnant again, she asks the insurance physician (*Kassenarzt*), Dr. Hansen, to help her. He refuses, knowing that, despite her health problems, it could not be done legally without overcoming daunting and time-consuming bureaucratic obstacles. Frau Nolte then sends for Frau Lehmann, a retired midwife, who performs the abortion; but something goes wrong. Dr. Hansen finds her bleeding to death, but is too late. He reproaches himself for not doing more, which the neighbors perceive as an admission of guilt. They summon the police, who arrest Dr. Hansen. In the sequel, *Justizkrise*, Dr. Hansen is tried and convicted on circumstantial evidence. Herr Nolte waits until after the death of the midwife to come forward and clear Dr. Hansen, fearing that the midwife would implicate him in the procurement of an abortion, since he was the one who paid her the money. But Dr. Hansen dies in prison on the day he was to be released.
Schönlank's play *Verfluchter Segen*, which was written in 1920, well before the wave of abortion pieces, tells the story of Willi and Erna Schanz, who have two children and a third on the way. Schanz has lost his job because of cutbacks at the factory. Their circumstances have gotten so bad that a neighbor cooks their potatoes for them as their gas service has been disconnected. They ask Dr. Werder, the insurance physician, to perform an abortion, but he turns them down. Frau Schanz is desperate and threatens to drown herself if no one helps. Schanz runs into a former co-worker who has turned to crime to survive and offers to let Schanz in on the racket. On his way home, a crowd has gathered around a body pulled out of the canal who turns out to be his wife. The bodies of his two children are recovered as well. The play ends with Schanz and his friends discussing becoming politically involved in order to change society.

The first scene of Döblin's *Die Ehe* deals with Fritz and Guste, a newly married couple. When Fritz loses his job due to the closure of the factory where he works, they are forced to move in with Guste's parents and brother in their two-room apartment. Guste does not inform her family of her pregnancy because she is worried about her husband's depressed state and her mother had already stated she would not tolerate any babies in her house. Guste tries instead to get help both from a physician, who tells her to trust in God, and from a governmental agency that offers her little more than diapers and a position as a wet-nurse. Both the doctor and the social worker operate under the sentimental impression that a baby does a troubled marriage good, that parental instinct will take over and the purpose of marriage -- the biological imperative -- will be fulfilled. Guste dies while
a midwife is performing the abortion. The second scene shows several families
with many children who have been issued a certification of their urgent need from
the housing authority (Dringlichkeitsschein) vying for the same apartment in order
to escape the squalor in which they currently exist. The landlord, decidedly averse
to children, accepts instead a civil servant and his wife who have neither children
nor the same urgent need for housing.

As we have seen, the literary portrayals bring up the same themes as those
in the public debate. Siegfried Kracauer, in his short characterization of the young
working woman “Mädchen im Beruf,” even identifies Braune’s Das Mädchen an
der Orga Privat as an example of “die aufklärende Literatur, die zum Unterschied
von der üblichen Belletristik und den irreführenden Filmen den angestellten Frauen
(und Männern) ihre wirkliche Situation bewußt zu machen sucht.”94 They used
their "Kunst als Waffe" to try to effect legal reform by portraying in a very realistic
manner the real suffering of women confronted with an unplanned pregnancy. In
the attempt to represent their parties' views and expand the definition of normal
and acceptable sexual behavior, however, all except Döblin, Schönlank and Credé
featured as their heroines exactly the type of woman to which conservatives
objected -- the New Woman -- and thus skewed attention away from the issues of
family limitation and birth control.

94 Siegfried Kracauer, “Mädchen im Beruf,” Querschnitt 12 (1932): 238; “the
instructive literature that, as opposed to the usual fiction and the misleading films, tries to
make [white-collar] working women (and men) aware of their real situation.”
The New Woman

Article 218 was originally aimed at the single women engaging in illicit sex and causing the breakdown of the institution of marriage.\textsuperscript{95} Such women were relatively rare in 1871 when Article 218 became law. After the war, however, the male population was greatly depleted which created what was considered the problem of “surplus” women. These women could no longer count on marriage as a means of financial support. In addition, after taking on an occupation during the war, many who were not forcibly demobilized were reluctant to return to the confines of hearth and home, a demanding job with no recognition or pay.

Typists in Trouble

The female office worker became an often-used figure in fiction as well as popular culture, symbolizing the glamorous New Woman of the 1920s. Eight of the works examined here feature typists. Much research has recently been devoted to the definition of the New Woman. Karin Hagemann’s exhibit catalog describes her as the

\begin{quote}
Prototyp der politischen und kulturellen Emanzipation. Rückblick-kend betrachtet erweist sich dieses Leitbild, als dessen Inbegriff die junge Angestellte der Großstadt gilt, die sich durch ein “modernes Äußeres” und eine “rationale” und “sachliche” Lebenseinstellung sowie eine ausgeprägte Freizeit- und Konsumorientierung auszeichnete, als Projektion männlicher Zeitgenossen.\textsuperscript{96}
\end{quote}


\textsuperscript{96} Hagemann 56; “prototype of political and cultural emancipation. In retrospect, this guiding image, the embodiment of which was the young white collar worker of the city who is distinguished by a “modern appearance” and a “rational” and “no-nonsense”
Office work was seen by many young women as a means to upward mobility, though its reality was far from glamorous. Ute Frevert traces the emergence of the female office worker and shows how the introduction of typewriters made secretarial work an almost exclusively female occupation.\textsuperscript{97} The transition from a white- to a "pink-collar" job was accompanied by a narrowing, simplification and routinization of duties that were formerly accomplished by men well-versed in the business as a whole. The new, simplified job description required fewer skills, less business knowledge, and it entailed little or no decision-making authority. Lower qualifications and over-supply depressed wages and increased the importance of appearance to the male supervisors. "Die geistige und materielle Besitzlosigkeit der weiblichen Angestellten ließ ihnen nur ihren Körper, der mit Hilfe auffallender Kleidung zum Statuszeichen stilisiert wurde.\textsuperscript{98}

Braune's "Tippräulein" in Das Mädchen an der Orga Privat are obsessed with fashion and deride Erna's provincial attire. No fewer than three of the typists, one of them herself married, are having affairs with the two bosses who are also married. This type of behavior conforms to Frevert's analysis of workplace outlook on life as well as a marked leisure and consumption orientation, proved to be a projection of male contemporaries."

\textsuperscript{97} Ute Frevert, "Vom Klavier zur Schreibmaschine -- Weiblicher Arbeitsmarkt und Rollenzuweisungen am Beispiel der weiblichen Angestellten in der Weimarer Republik," Frauen in der Geschichte I: Frauenrechte und die gesellschaftliche Arbeit der Frauen im Wandel, eds. Annette Kuhn and Gerhard Schneider (Düsseldorf: Schwann, 1979) 82-112.

\textsuperscript{98} Frevert, "Schreibmaschine" 100; "The intellectual and material poverty of female white-collar workers left them with only their bodies, which were stylized into status symbols with the assistance of showy attire."
dynamics: "Solange die Erfahrung gemeinschaftlicher Diskriminierung durch die potentiell realisierbare Projektion des individuellen Aufstiegs kraft persönlicher Attraktivität verdrängt werden konnte, überwog 'neidische Kleiderkritik' das situationsgerechtere Zusammengehörigkeitsgefühl." Erna has more than her share of common sense and the country bumpkin is able to see through most of the big-city artifice. But the ridicule of her clothes is enough to make her abandon some of her traditional values: she transforms her Sunday best into a fashionable outfit to impress her co-workers. Religion has no place in big-city life and Erna knows that her mother would be disappointed.

For most young women, work was seen as a temporary stage on the road to marriage. For the working class women, office work was a step up the social ladder, even if the pay was comparable to factory work. It also afforded the possibility of marrying up and out of the working class, the Cinderella fairy tale come true. The office, it was thought, was a good place to meet men. Keun's tongue-in-cheek "System des Männerfangs" reassures women about dating their bosses: "Man kann unbesorgt seine Angestellte sein -- er hat nicht die Hemmungen eines Arztes bei seiner Patientin. Allein mit ihm zusammen Überstunden machen, bietet

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99 Frevert, "Schreibmaschine" 102; "As long as the experience of common discrimination could be suppressed by the potentially realizable projection of individual advancement based on personal attractiveness, 'petty criticism of clothing' prevailed over a feeling of solidarity, which would have been more appropriate, given the situation."

100 The Cinderella concept is attributed to Siegfried Kracauer.
sogar äußerst günstige Chancen."\textsuperscript{101} A picture appearing in a proletarian newspaper showed a steno pool with the caption: "Wie viele Stenotypistinnen heiraten ihren Chef?"\textsuperscript{102} and most likely attempted to dispel the notion that marrying the boss was a common occurrence, but it also attests to how widespread the notion was. The possibility of promotion or even marriage, however remote, made the young women “vulnerable to sexual exploitation which is present whether they ‘profit’ from it or not.”\textsuperscript{103}

Keun’s Gilgi understands the advantage her looks accord her. She gets a job advertised in the newspaper to type an elderly man’s memoirs in the evenings - - a second job for her -- over another woman, who has been unemployed for five months. “Die hat ja die gleiche Chance gehabt. So? Hat sie? Mit dem krankeligen, alten Gesicht, der laschigen Haltung, mit den matten blicklosen Augen und den häßlichen Kleidern?? Wer nimmt die denn noch?”\textsuperscript{104} Keun also has Gilgi put her theory into practice and use her feminine wiles to her advantage.

She flirts with her boss, bats her eyes, but also knows how to distract him when

\footnotesize
\textsuperscript{101} Irmgard Keun, “System des Männerfangs,” Querschnitt 12 (1932): 261; “You don’t have to worry about being his employee -- he doesn’t have the scruples a doctor has toward a female patient. Putting in overtime with him when no one else is there offers extremely good opportunities.”

\textsuperscript{102} Hagemann, Fraensache 42. The picture originally appeared in the Arbeiter-Illustrierte-Zeitung (No. 11, 1931); “How many typists marry the boss?”


\textsuperscript{104} Keun Gilgi 84; “She had the same chance. Really? Did she? With her haggard, old face, her slouching posture, with her dull, lifeless eyes and those ugly clothes?? Who would hire her?”
things get too serious. Before dining out with him one evening, she arranges a chance meeting with a stunningly beautiful friend, whom she knew her boss could not resist. While out on a date, Trude's boss in Das Mädchen an der Orga Privat tries to set her up with one of his business associates. Feeling cheapened, she realizes that he sees her as little more than a prostitute, and she then leaves. Her relationship with her boss ends then, too; he moves on to another typist.

The New Woman is independent, rational and capable, well groomed and cultured. As the projection of what men desire, the New Woman serves as a Wunschbild that authors recreated on stage, screen, and in fiction, and after which real women modeled themselves.105 These real women, however, were also single, having sex, getting pregnant and having abortions. They thus represented a Schreckbild in the eyes of society.

They were simultaneously seen as guardians of morality and as the chief agents of a “culture of decadence." [. . .] While the “new woman” did not signal female emancipation or the collapse of patriarchy, she did represent -- to some -- a moral crisis. The definition of the female in the Weimar period included images of women as victim, threat, and salvation. Thus the “new woman” captured the imagination of progressives who celebrated her, even as they sought to discipline and regulate her, and of conservatives who blamed her for everything from the decline of the birth rate and the laxity of morals to the unemployment of male workers.106

While the works under consideration here in many ways try to counter the stereotype in order to marshal support for a repeal of the abortion law, the authors

105 See also Grossmann, “Girlkultur” 64.

were not immune to contradictions in their portrayal of the New Woman. Many of the New Woman's characteristics and the technological developments that enabled her existence were welcome to Socialist and Communist supporters. A more rational rather than emotional attitude toward life, greater efficiency at home and on the job (made possible by typewriters, kitchen gadgets, etc. to make juggling the double-burden easier) leading to more leisure time were seen as positive developments.  

However, the same people who welcomed more leisure time were also critical of the ways young people chose to spend it. We see the authors' criticism often in the form of passing remarks. References to the dance craze (Tanzwut), movies, and sports point to the fear of decadence and sexual anarchy. As many of these fads were imported from the United States, their criticism is also directed toward "Americanism." American capitalism and consumerism were considered responsible for young women's obsession with fashion and make-up, the modernization of factories leading to mass unemployment, the unfair distribution of wealth -- in short everything that was wrong with society.

Contradictions

Bredel uses the negative aspects of the stereotypical New Woman to illustrate what he views as the differences between the classes and to glorify proletarian virtues in Die Rosenhofstraße. Else Langfeld, a seamstress "down-}

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107 See Bebel 578-80.

sized" because she spoke out during a strike, is not pretty and has a rather rotund figure with misshapen legs from childhood malnutrition. But she is pleasant, helpful and works "wie ein Pferd," taking in laundry and odd sewing jobs as well as keeping house for her widower father. She thus enjoys the respect of the women in the neighborhood. In contrast

war die hübsche kleine Trudel Merker mit den lachenden Augen und den schnurgeraden Beinen, die soviel Verehrer wie Finger an der Hand hatte, gegen die Else ein richtiges Luxusgeschöpf, trotzdem sie nur Verkäuferin in einem Papierwarengeschäft war. Aber sie trug kunstvolle Schuhe, seidene Kleider, hauchdünne Strümpfe und den Hut immer nach der neuesten Mode. Heimlich half sie der Wirkung ihrer schön geschwungenen, schmalen Augenbrauen durch einen dunklen Stift und wenn der nicht zur Hand war, durch ein angekohltes Streichholz nach. Ihrer Mutter half sie im Haushalt nie; sie manikürte dauernd ihre Hände oder kämmte und zupfte vor dem Spiegel das Haar.  

Bredel sets up the contrast between Else's wholesome plainness and Trudel's artificial glamour. The discrepancy in Trudel's expensive clothes and the small amount she could be expected to earn raises the suspicion that she received the clothes in return for sexual favors. By implication, it is the fault of the capitalist system, to which Trudel has fallen victim, that "an integral part of their [sales-women's] job was to sell a product by seduction, symbolically, that is, through the

109 Bredel 9; "like a horse."

110 Bredel 11; "there was the cute little Trudel Merker with her laughing eyes and her straight legs, who has as many admirers as she has fingers, compared to Else a really luxurious little number, despite the fact that she was only a sales clerk in a stationery store. But she wore well-made shoes, silk clothes, filmy stockings and hats that were always of the latest fashion. She secretly enhanced the effect of her nicely shaped, thin eyebrows through the use of a pencil or a burnt match if a pencil wasn't at hand. She never helped her mother with the housework; she constantly manicured her hands or combed and arranged her hair in front of the mirror."
use of feminine wiles.\textsuperscript{111} The women of the mainly proletarian neighborhood consider Trudel "als nicht zu ihnen gehörig,"\textsuperscript{112} and Bredel, true to his class consciousness, imbues her with little that is likable. Both the narrator and the male characters refer to Trudel mainly as "die kleine Merker," referring not only to her stature, but belittling her at the same time. Else helps Trudel find a midwife to perform an abortion, not because they had ever been close friends, but, it seems, more as a matter of Communist Party policy. Else is taken aback later, however, when Trudel does not want to be reminded of "diese ekelhaften Stunden! Vorbei und erledigt! Gottseidank!"\textsuperscript{113} and changes the subject to her new hat and a film she recently saw.

Else becomes pregnant as well. But for Bredel it appears that a proletarian Communist having an illegitimate child is a completely different matter, one not to be concerned about. He devotes a great deal of attention to the ill-treatment Else receives at the hospital but does not address how she plans to clothe and feed the child as her own father's unemployment benefits have run out and Fritz, her party-functionary boyfriend, has been laid off. This is a fundamental question that is not directly confronted in the novel, but one that was central to the debate in the early 1930s: how can the state justify forcing women to have children when they cannot afford to care for them. It is implied that, as efficient and hard-working as Else is,

\textsuperscript{111} Bridenthal and Koonz 51.

\textsuperscript{112} Bredel 11; "not one of them."

\textsuperscript{113} Bredel 38; "that horrible time! Done and over with! Thank God!"
she will get by somehow. Else also becomes less important to the story the more her pregnancy limits her party-related activities. The excuse used is that she is embarrassed to be seen in public as her pregnancy advances. It is not made clear whether her embarrassment stems from the pregnancy itself or from the gossip the illegitimacy would generate. Her increasingly subordinate role is taken for granted, even though the KPD most supported women's equality. Renate Bridenthal and Claudia Koonz point out that Marxists believed “the inferior place of women within the family was attributed to private property and not to cultural norms or vague entities like the male ego.” Bredel was thus not immune to the contradictions inherent in such a complex issue.

Whereas Bredel's work is blatantly pro-Communist, Braune's Mädchen an der Orga Privat is more subtle, but uses many of the same features. His main character, Erma Halbe, comes to the city to escape small-town life and to seek her "bescheidenes Glück." Like Else, Erma also has knock-knees and is not particularly pretty. Both come from proletarian households, but Erma chooses to pursue a white-collar career as a typist, as opposed to Else's skilled trade as a

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114 Bebel stresses the need to change the public attitude to accept pregnant women in public life. He commends the first Finnish female Members of Parliament on continuing their jobs while pregnant (391).

115 Bridenthal and Koonz 37.

116 Ortolff 159: “modest happiness.”
seamstress.\textsuperscript{117} Both also lose their jobs as the result of speaking out at work. Else is fired after participating in a strike of textile workers. Erna is terminated for organizing a work stoppage in support of a co-worker who was fired for pregnancy-related absences. While Else's boyfriend introduces her to organized communism, Ema has no direct connection to the KPD. But her boyfriend's talk of unions and her organization of the sit-in at the office\textsuperscript{118} indicate an understanding and support of workers' causes that is in keeping with communist philosophy. Neither woman is morally above reproach. Else's boyfriend moves into the apartment she shares with her father (which becomes a source of gossip at the neighborhood bakery) and she becomes pregnant with no hint of an impending marriage. And Erna is evicted from the room she rents because of her wanton ways -- her boyfriend spent the night and her landlady caught them.

The most important feature they share is that both help a pregnant friend. As mentioned before, Else goes to her comrades in the Party. Erna, being new in town, has no connections and therefore naively makes the rounds of doctor's offices herself during her lunch hour. Finally, she goes to a woman doctor to whom she bares her soul. This doctor, too, is unwilling to help, but she does promise to leave a message at Erna's apartment with the name of someone who

\textsuperscript{117} Grossmann believes a greater gap existed between generations than between white- and blue-collar workers ("Girkultur" 65). This idea is consistent with the proletarization of the lower-middle class male workers observed in Fallada's \textit{Kleiner Mann}.

\textsuperscript{118} This was quite an accomplishment, since, according to Braidental and Koonz, white-collar female workers were difficult to organize into unions because most considered their jobs to be temporary until they married (52).
will. Although Ema's effort comes too late for Trude, who had apparently already tried various potions, if not more invasive measures, Ema, like Else, makes herself guilty by complicity.

This complicity becomes problematic, however, in the context of the value judgments implied by the authors and of the morality question they raise in such a cavalier and one-sided manner. The derogatory descriptions of the sales clerk Trudel Merker as a flighty flapper and of "Tippmädel" Trude as a step shy of a prostitute who sleeps with her boss for the material goods she cannot afford contrast sharply with the work-horse Else and the determined, efficient Ema. Trude/I use their looks; Else/Ema, who lack the straight legs and perky appearance must rely on their sense of ethical superiority.

It is acceptable for non-organized, non-sympathizing women to have an abortion, but not for women with fully developed class-consciousness. Their heroines pity the victims of the class-discriminatory system and, out of a sense of solidarity, obtain the necessary information, through persistence or connections. But they imply that Ema would never be careless enough to need it and Else would never stoop to using it. Their heroines both dream of a normal life with husbands and homes to care for. These are modest dreams -- bourgeois dreams -- and not the unrealistic Cinderella dreams of those whom they help, for whom domestic drudgery holds no charm. Braune and Bredel simultaneously reinforce traditional gender roles, drum up support for liberalizing abortion laws, and condemn as wanton and frivolous those who would avail themselves of such reforms.
Abortion is a complicated issue fraught with problematic decisions and few clear-cut answers including that of morality. But these two left-wing authors make value judgments without directly confronting the questions, take a contradictory stance for which Bredel ridicules his Nazi characters without acknowledging or perhaps even recognizing the same in their own. They argue for sexual freedom and proscribe behavior at the same time.

**Male vs. Female Authors**

A very important difference exists between the male and female authors. The characters of Baum and Keun, the two women among these sixteen authors who made an unwanted pregnancy central to their works, are the only ones whose characters choose to raise the child by themselves. Helene hoped that Rainer would not go through with the suicide pact, but she made the choice not to commit suicide and to keep the baby before she knew what he would do. Gilgi, on the other hand, finds it necessary to leave Martin, the father of the child. During the weeks after visiting the doctor, Gilgi decides that she does want to keep the baby. However, she knows that keeping the baby and staying with Martin would worsen their already toxic relationship. She believes that this child is the only force strong enough to extricate her from the lethargy that has plagued her since she met Martin. By focusing on the reality of the baby, she regains her own sense of purpose. Helene, too, is able to get herself back on track because of the baby. While in jail for questioning about her part in Rainer's suicide, she suddenly understands the chemistry she has been working on at the same moment she feels the baby's first movements. (Fallada's Lämmchen also carries her pregnancy
to term and keeps the baby, but she and Pinneberg marry. Thus she returns to
the refuge of patriarchal order which ensures legitimate status for the child and
secures any spousal and dependent benefits available to them.) Katharina von
Ankum interprets Helene’s and Gilgi’s decision as the emancipatory image of the
“New Mother,” the combination of elements of the “New Woman” with the concept
of “spiritual motherhood,” from which women could draw energy to transform
society.  

The majority of the male authors, on the other hand, prefer to see their
female characters as victims. Their characters are not women rebelling against a
patriarchal order, rather they are workers first and foremost, puppets in a class-
discriminatory system. Their heroines, many of whom are elevated to martyrs,
seek abortions out of financial desperation, not out of a desire to exercise an
inherent right to self-determination (the financial future of Rehfish’s Lotte depends
on her fiance not knowing about her pregnancy). Not one of the upper-class
women goes uncriticized for wanting an abortion. Not one of the lower-class
survivors goes unpunished (Rehfish’s Lotte must live with the threat of blackmail).
Each and every one of the survivors has a man to protect her in the end (Hotopp
has a friend of Lee Tews’ late husband meet her on her way home from prison and
wisk her away to the good life in the Soviet Union).

chem. Helene Willfuer and Irmgard Keun’s Gilgi -- eine von uns, Women in German
This is not to say that Baum and Keun, because their characters keep their babies, are not as radical in their stance on Article 218 as the men who have their characters die from an illegal abortions. Neither Helene nor Gilgi oppose abortion on moral or ethical grounds; indeed, like many of the heroines by male authors, their first choice was to have an abortion. However, Gilgi acknowledges the unresolvable dilemma surrounding the abortion issue, influenced by her learning that she was adopted: “[U]nd der Paragraph 218 -- gewiß hätte der schon längst abgeschafft werden müssen, obwohl sie ihm vielleicht das Leben verdankt.”¹²⁰ Raising an illegitimate child alone at that time was actually the more difficult path because of the social and legal prejudices against illegitimacy. An illegal abortion could in most cases be kept secret, but an illegitimate child could not. Whereas the difficulties of illegitimacy lie ahead of Gilgi, the reader sees what Helene endures and sacrifices to support herself and her child. Baum and Keun have their characters face problems squarely and leave them (Helene only temporarily) on the outer fringes of society where they must be independent in order to survive.

Conclusions

The problems of abortion, declining birth-rates and illegitimacy were inextricably intertwined with their social and economic roots. Conservative politicians chose to focus on a perceived moral failure and to resort to coercion to solve society’s problems. Socially concerned artists, in an effort to allay society’s fears of moral collapse, tried to promote understanding for these women by portraying

¹²⁰ Keun Gilgi 58; “[A]nd Article 218 -- certainly it should have been abolished long ago, although she possibly owes her very life to it.”
them in a favorable light. The authors reacted to the public debate and took a stand on what they viewed as injustices. In turn, the reception of the works, particularly the plays, caused a Gegenreaktion from the right (targeting of Dr. Wolf for arrest was likely not solely due to his work as a physician, but also to send a message because of the success of his play), which then mobilized the left as well. The works were then not just a “mirror” of the authors’ view of societal ills, but also an active participant in the public debate.

However, in portraying stereotypical figures the authors may well have done their cause more harm than good. No matter how favorably the women are presented, the recipient sees his/her own point of view vindicated. The Right sees single, immoral women, working-class life-styles and morals that should be brought up to middle-class standards, women who should be staying at home with their families instead of working. They nod their heads at what they view as wrong with society and feel that the women got what they deserved for not being more like them. The Left’s mind is not changed, either, since they already agree with the author. They see a class-discriminatory law with unequal application and “real” people with “real” problems.

Cultural products such as these plays and novels probably won few new converts to their causes and more likely served to polarize the discourse even further. The demonstrations and counter-demonstrations accompanying performances of Wolf’s play Cyankali can be seen as evidence for this. Some of these demonstrations turned violent. The bourgeois press, however, remained luke-
warm.\textsuperscript{121} After the National Socialist take-over in 1933, however, all debate ceased.

EXCURSUS

THE NAZI YEARS

When the National Socialists came to power in 1933, their pronatalist, social Darwinist population policy was given high priority in national politics. New laws were implemented swiftly and brought drastic changes into the lives of women. These laws closely followed the principles Adolf Hitler delineated in Mein Kampf:

It will be the duty of the People’s State to consider the race as the basis of the community’s existence. It must make sure that the purity of the racial strain will be preserved. It must proclaim the truth that the child is the most valuable possession a nation can have. It must make sure that only those who are healthy shall beget children [...] it must be branded as reprehensible to refrain from giving healthy children to the nation.¹

The Nazis started small by subsidizing marriage. The Law for the Reduction of Unemployment enacted in June, 1933, served to pull women out of the work force and back into the home by offering interest-free “marriage loans” to qualifying couples. Since double-income families were also banned, these loans replaced some of the wife’s lost wages. Loan applicants had to prove they were “free from inheritable mental and physical defects, contagious diseases, or other illnesses that threaten to prove fatal and appear to prevent the marriage from being in the interest of the community.”² Each child born to the couple reduced

¹ Quoted in Rudolf Frercks, German Population Policy (Berlin: Terramare, 1938) 31.

² Frercks 5.
the initial principal by 25 percent. Marriage counseling centers that were not
closed completely were converted into "eugenic counseling facilities." The
Ministry of Finance estimated that by 1937, 800,000 women had been withdrawn
from the work force as a result of this program.\(^4\)

Large families were rewarded in various ways. Grants to needy families
with at least four children under 16 years of age, monthly child-allowances for
needy families with five or more children, and income tax rates based on marital
status and number of children offset the higher fixed costs incurred by large
families. A bronze medal was awarded to a mother for the birth of her fifth child,
silver for the sixth, gold for the seventh. The parents could have a "nationally
prominent man" be the godfather of the seventh child.\(^5\) The number of children
required to receive a reward may have come from calculations projecting that
every genetically sound family (erbgesunde Familie) would have to produce at
least four children in order to maintain the "stability of the race" (Volksbestand).\(^6\)
A governmental pamphlet remarks:

But at the same time care has to be taken that financial incentives
to have more and more children will not be given to those families

\(^3\) Claudia Koonz, Mothers in the Fatherland, Women, the Family, and Nazi

\(^4\) Frercks 6.

\(^5\) Koonz Mothers 186; she also mentions that Hindenburg was chosen more
often than Hitler and that the practice was discontinued.

\(^6\) Rudolf Ramm, Ärztliche Rechts- und Standeskunde. Der Arzt als
Gesundheitsberzieher (Berlin: deGruyter, 1943) 150. See also Ferdinand Hoffmann
that are of little value to the community and have proved unable to make their way in the practical walks of life.\textsuperscript{7}

The upper classes, it was felt, were not doing their part to produce enough high-quality children for the state. An effort was made to counter the tendency among the educated and in the upper classes to delay marriages and have fewer children. This meant that wage and salary scales were revised in the civil service to award the highest rates to men upon marriage so that financial considerations would not postpone the decision to start a family.\textsuperscript{8}

These considerable financial incentives for married couples and families were considered short-term measures to reverse the declining birth rate. The government did not believe that the low birth rate was at its root a question of wages, rather that it was due to "[d]ie gesinnungsmäßige Abkehr von artmäßigen Sitten unserer Vorfahren [...] Artgemäße deutsche Sitte war es aber seit vorgeschichtlicher Zeit, daß im geordneten Familienverband eine möglichst große Zahl von gesunden Kindern vorhanden war."\textsuperscript{9}

Completely ignoring the statistics from the first two decades of the century, Robert Kaiser, a physician who gives his title as "Reichsbundesleiter des Reichsbundes Deutsche Familie," places the start of the birth rate decline after the November Revolution of 1918 and blames Jewish

\textsuperscript{7} Frercks 9.

\textsuperscript{8} Frercks 10-11.

\textsuperscript{9} Robert Kaiser, "Vorwort," \emph{Sittliche Entartung und Geburtenschwund} by Ferdinand Hoffmann (1938; München: Lehmann, 1941) 3; "[a] change in principles away from the values inherent in the race of our forebears [...]. The culture of the German race from pre-historic times held that a well-ordered family union produced the largest possible number of healthy children."
and Marxist influence on the culture for society's ills. Among these ills he lists societal emphasis on "unrestrained sexual lust" (zügellose Geschlechtsgier), the detachment of the sex drive from the urge to procreate, "free love," and abortion.\textsuperscript{10}

The year 1933 also saw the prohibition of birth control\textsuperscript{11} as well as the passage of the Act for the Prevention of Hereditarily Diseased Offspring (Gesetz zur Verhütung erbkranken Nachwuches). The Genetic Health Act (Erbgesundheitsgesetz), enacted in July 1933, and effective January 1, 1934, mandated sterilization for those whose mental or physical conditions (including severe alcoholism) were deemed hereditary. It also prohibited voluntary sterilization as well as abortion for those who were "normal" except on medical grounds to preserve the patient's life or health.\textsuperscript{12} This is the first formal codification of the medical indication into law. A system to oversee the process was established in July, 1935, according to which a panel of experts, who reviewed petitions and provided two additional opinions, was to approve all medically indicated abor-

\textsuperscript{10} Kaiser 3.

\textsuperscript{11} Koonz 6-7. Ramm mentions the Polizeiverordnung über Verfahren, Mittel und Gegenstände zur Unterbrechung und Verhütung von Schwangerschaften (152), but does not mention the date it was enacted. He does, however, refer to a provision contained in the Verordnung zum Schutze von Ehe, Familie und Mutterschaft of 1943 prohibiting contraceptives (and even devices and preparations to prevent the spread of sexually transmitted diseases).

\textsuperscript{12} Gante 17-18; Frercks 17-23. Frercks provides an English translation of the text of the law.
tions. And the Law for the Promotion of Healthy Marriages (Gesetz zum Schutze der Erbgesundheit des deutschen Volkes), enacted in October, 1936, took the matter further. This law prohibited marriage if one of the parties had contracted a contagious disease (including tuberculosis and sexually transmitted diseases), had been declared mentally incompetent, suffered from a mental condition "which makes it appear that the marriage would be undesirable in the interests of the community," or had a hereditary disease described in the Hereditarily Diseased Offspring Act, unless the afflicted person had already been sterilized.

In 1943, the punishments for abortion were made dramatically harsher. Penitentiary was reintroduced for serious cases and the death penalty was introduced for a perpetrator who "die Lebenskraft des deutschen Volkes fortge-setzt beeinträchtigt." With the Ordnance for the Protection of Marriage, Family and Motherhood (Verordnung zum Schutze von Ehe, Familie und Mutterschaft) dated March 9, 1943, non-German women were exempted from the ban on abortions under the "racial justification." Gante notes that abortions for the

13 Gante 18; should there be conflicting opinions, the chairman of the panel was to render a final decision.

14 Ramm 144.

15 Frercks 30.


17 Gante 20; Maurach 50.
purpose of racial hygiene were expressly rejected in the 1918 draft of the law, making the Nazi break with legal tradition in this point all the more alarming. The Nazis also planned to remove the abortion regulations from the category of homicide, and to place them instead under the heading of Racial and Genetic Assault (Angriffe gegen Rasse und Erbgut).\textsuperscript{18}

Despite the combination of incentives and sanctions, the Nazi population policy failed to raise the birth rate significantly. Abortion convictions, however, increased steadily. Claudia Koonz indicates several reasons that continued to drive the tendency toward smaller families: “aspirations for a higher standard of living, the atmosphere of Nazi Germany, the expense of raising children, and housing shortages.”\textsuperscript{19} These reasons remained essentially the same as before the Nazis seized power and no amount of propaganda was able to counter such prevalent attitudes.

The Nazis burned the works written by most of the authors discussed in Chapter 2, and many of the authors themselves were persecuted. Frank Arman, an Austrian who had taken German citizenship in 1920, left Germany in 1933 and his German citizenship was subsequently revoked; he was also involved in a conspiracy to assassinate Hitler in 1934. Vicki Baum had decided to stay in the United States even before the Nazis came to power. Irmgard Keun's works were

\textsuperscript{18} Maurach 50.

\textsuperscript{19} Koonz 187.
blacklisted. Willi Bredel was interned in a concentration camp in 1933, fled to
Czechoslovakia in 1934 and later to the Soviet Union. Hans José Rehfisch was
also arrested in 1933; he emigrated to Vienna after his release in 1936. Alfred
Döblin, Bruno Schönlank, Albert Hotopp, Ernst Ottwald, Friedrich Wolf, Arnold
Zweig all left the country in 1933, taking various routes and ending at various
destinations.

Literature produced within Germany after the take-over was watched care-
fully by the state. Authors who actively supported the regime wrote works with
nationalistic themes drawn from German history, rural life, and the military. Authors who were not directly connected with the National Socialists chose mostly
nonpolitical themes for their texts. This second group of authors was made up of
individuals or small groups, including those who considered themselves to be in
"inner emigration." "Je mehr der Alltag des Hitler-Regimes den Autoren Bedenken
einflößte, desto mehr schritt die Introvertierung, Privatisierung und Idyllisierung
dieser Literatur fort."  

Under the increasingly repressive conditions, it is not surprising that
abortion was considered a theme unworthy of literary attention by the authors who

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20 Barbara Kosta, "Unruly Daughters and Modernity: Irmgard Keun's Gilgi -- eine

21 Hans-Bernhard Moeller, "Literatur zur Zeit des Faschismus," Geschichte der
deutschen Literatur, ed. Ehrhard Bahr, vol. 3 Vom Realismus bis zur Gegenwarts-

22 Moeller 344; "The more the daily routine of the Hitler regime began to trouble
authors, the further they turned to introversion, privatization and idyllization in their
literature.
remained in the country. Any scenario under which an abortion could have occurred ran counter to the Nazi's idealized version of morality and motherhood. In an essay linking moral degeneracy with declines in births, Ferdinand Hoffmann, a public health officer, quoted Tacitus's 2000 year old description of the Germanic people and suggests it as a model for modern society: only a virgin can land a husband, no matter how beautiful, young or rich she is; adultery is rare; childlessness has no advantages; limiting the number of children as well as infanticide are an outrage; good morals are more effective than good laws.\textsuperscript{23}

The lack of literary reflections under National Socialist rule is, in itself, a significant point. That the abortion statistics did not show the radical drop the Nazis hoped for indicates that the Nazis were much more effective at controlling cultural production than individual behavior. It also shows the tenacity of women's desire to control their lives and their willingness to resist, even in the face of a totalitarian regime that managed to control just about everything else.

\textsuperscript{23} Hoffmann 42.
CHAPTER 3

POSTWAR LITERATURE

Immediately after World War II ended, Germany's main concern was rebuilding. Not only did the cities need to be reconstructed, a new society and new literature had to be created out of the rubble. National Socialist population policy, with its pronouncements on who was fit to live and its usurpation of decisions about procreation, made the issue of choice even more complex than it inherently is. Coming to terms with Nazi atrocities is a process that continues to this day. But abortion was only one of many problems facing the postwar generation.

Likewise, abortion as a theme of literature is rarely the single, central focus of a work, as we saw in works of the Weimar Republic. Rather, abortion is one of many concerns, but often one that forms a turning point in the lives of the characters. Nor are postwar works featuring abortion linked to a particular political movement as in the Weimar Republic. They are written by "engaged authors," who are aware of and comment on political developments; but their exploration of the abortion issue is generally directed inward as a personal examination instead of toward the external political debate.

For these reasons, many postwar literary representations of abortion seem to exist independent of the external political discussion. What I hope to show in this chapter is how the deep conflicts that resonate in literary works are linked to the public debate without, in most cases, overtly commenting on them. As these works, like their predecessors, are anchored in specific historical moments, it is
necessary to be familiar with the historical background information, even though it
does not tie into the works as integrally as in previous periods. What results is, I
believe, a picture of crisis pregnancies that reflects the complexities inherent in
such a difficult decision.

I shall look at the selected works individually to determine the internal role
abortion plays before examining the broader aspects of the abortion issue. The
works will be addressed in chronological order and grouped according to major
changes in social attitudes and legal conditions. I have limited my selection to
German authors because they represent a continuation of the Weimar Republic
tradition and because the continuing public controversy in Germany has not been
carried out to the same extent in other German speaking countries. I will exclude
Franz Xaver Kroetz’s “modernization” of Maria Magdalena (1972)¹ and Peter
Hacks’ adaptation of Die Kindermörderin (1963),² because they both follow the
originals closely to demonstrate that the situations are still relevant. While an
effort has been made to include as many examples as possible, the selection is
certainly not exhaustive.

¹ Franz Xaver Kroetz, Maria Magdalena, Gesammelte Stücke (Frankfurt/M: Suhrkamp, 1975) 419-75.
² Peter Hacks, Die Kindermörderin, Zwei Bearbeitungen (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1963) 72-144.
The Early Postwar Period

Historical Background

After the Allies took control of Germany in 1945, the laws introduced by the National Socialist regime were to be rescinded.\(^3\) All punishments that were made more severe by the Nazis were annulled and returned to their pre-1933 levels. In the case of Article 218, the 1943 change that introduced the death penalty was dropped, and repeated abortion was no longer considered a crime against the state.

The Genetic Health Act (*Erbgesundheitsgesetz*) which codified into law the widely accepted medical indication, was a more difficult matter. All the states in the three Western zones retained a provision to allow abortion in order to preserve the life or health of the mother, but each state regulated it differently and based it on varying legal foundations. This confusing patchwork of local and regional regulations remained in effect until well into the 1950s. The states in the Soviet-controlled Eastern zone directed the courts to refrain from prosecuting cases under Article 218 until a unified solution was reached. By 1948, all states in the Eastern zone, with slight differences in the conditions, exempted medically and criminologically (in cases of rape) indicated abortion from prosecution.\(^4\) Several states also permitted a social-medical justification, in which the woman’s financial

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\(^3\) This and the following according to Michael Gante, *S. 218 in der Diskussion: Meinungs- und Willensbildung 1945-1976* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1991) 24-28.

\(^4\) The concept of *straffrei*, also used in the current version of the law, does not make abortion for these cases fully legal. The government neither officially permits nor condones it; it simply refrains from prosecuting and punishing such cases.
circumstances were weighed against the impact on her health. Only one state, Mecklenburg, permitted the eugenic indication. In 1950, however, the laws were unified, and only the medical justification was permitted.

**Early Literary Abortions**

The works that were written during this period of transition show a society in which illegal abortions were readily available. Despite the difficult conditions of life in the rubble, financial need is not the primary issue for women seeking an abortion as it was in the works of the Weimar Republic. The female characters were also not abandoned by their lovers as in typical situations of the past. The problems stem from the conflicting needs and desires of the people involved.

The story of Washington Price, a black American soldier stationed in postwar Munich, and his German girlfriend, Carla, is a single strand among the many that make up Wolfgang Koeppen's attack against the hypocrisy of the restoration of German society in *Tauben im Gras* (1951).\(^6\) This novel is not, as many others written at the time were, an effort to come to terms with the past. Rather it is an effort to come to terms with the present in which Koeppen sees the past living on with just superficial changes.

During the war, Carla's husband went missing in action and is presumed dead. On the home front, she worked as a secretary for the German army, after the war for a black unit of the US army. Washington drove her home from work, gave her and soon the entire neighborhood chocolate, canned goods, and ciga-

rettes -- commodities in short supply for Germans. She quit her job, moved in
with Washington and spent her days dreaming of the life she would lead in the
United States, the one advertised in the American magazines in an all-electric
kitchen: “keine Angsträume ängstigten mehr, denn you can sleep soundly tonight
with Maybels Magnesium Milch, und die Frau war die Königin, der alles dort diente
und zu Füßen lag.”

Carla becomes pregnant. While Washington calls his parents to send
money so he can persuade Carla to marry him, Carla goes to the gynecologist she
had bribed with food throughout the war for just such a contingency. She realizes
that even the American society would exclude her along with her black husband
and mixed-race child.

Da aber das Kind in ihrem Leib sich regte, fürchtete auch sie sich vor
sichtbaren und unsichtbaren Schildern, [. . .] die sie aus dem
Paradies der automatischen Küchen und der Pillensicherheit ver-
treiben könnten, Weiße unerwünscht, Schwarze unerwünscht, es
traf sie beides, und für Juden unerwünscht war, ohne daß er es
wußte oder besonders wollte, der Vater ihres Sohnes in den Krieg
gezogen. Unerwünscht war ihr das neue Kind, das dunkle, das
gespenkelte [. . .].

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6 Koeppen, Tauben 50; “no nightmares frightened her anymore, because you can
sleep soundly tonight with Maybel’s Milk of Magesia, and the wife was the queen over
there and everyone stood at her service and worshipped at her feet.”

7 Koeppen, Tauben 63; “But ever since she felt the child moving in her body, she
was afraid of visible and invisible signs [...] that could drive her out of the paradise of
automatic kitchens and of the security of the pill, whites not welcome, blacks not welcome
both applied to them, and the father of her son, without knowing or particularly wanting to,
got to war for Jews not welcome. Unwelcome was the new child, the dark one, the
mottled one [. . .]."
When Washington learns of Carla's plans to terminate her pregnancy, he goes to the doctor and prevents the abortion. Despite the doctor's indebtedness to Carla for the food she gave him during the war, he defers to the father's wishes; Carla's wishes have no import when the father exercises his right to offspring. "Sehen Sie, der Vater will das Kind haben. Ich kann da gar nichts machen." Like Carla, Washington dreams of an idyllic family life. He hopes to be able to open an inn where he can hang a sign stating: "Niemand ist unerwünscht."

Carla's fear of being an outcast of society and of breaking away from the values she grew up with, the values that were defeated in the war, drive her to seek an abortion. The remnants of Nazi ideology show when she meets her mother at a café. Frau Behrend does not want to be seen with her daughter because of what her friends might think. Her social standing has already been compromised by her husband leaving her for a gypsy. Frau Behrend, when confronted with unspeakable things, remains silent, so she and Carla anticipate the other's responses and "read" each other's mind in separate inner monologues. A part of Carla agrees with her mother and thinks that having a baby with Washington is a sin. She tries to blame it on the times and reproaches herself for not waiting for a white American soldier who could have made the magazine dream possible. This dilemma between a desire for someone to take care of her and the fear of being on the receiving end of discrimination forms the crux of their story.

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8 Koeppen, Tauben 136; "You see, the father wants to have the child. I can't do anything for you."
The idea to terminate the pregnancy is an automatic reaction on Carla's part, not a moral dilemma. "Sie glaubte. An Gott? An die Konvention. Wo war Gott? Gott hätte vielleicht den schwarzen Bräutigam gebilligt. Ein Gott für alle Tage. Gott war aber schon bei ihrer Mutter nur ein Feiertagsgott gewesen. Carla war nicht zu Gott geführt worden. Man hatte sie bei der Kommunion nur bis zu seinem Tisch gebracht."\textsuperscript{9}

Washington persuades Carla to marry him and leave Germany for France. What exactly Washington said to Carla to make her change her mind about the abortion is not revealed in the novel. Koeppen follows "in einer weit zurückreichenden Tradition der deutschen Schriftsteller und Intellektuellen, die seit je auf Frankreich als das Land der Revolution ihre Hoffnung setzten."\textsuperscript{10} Carla and Washington, along with her father and his gypsy girlfriend, Vlasta, are positive characters who break with traditions and embody hope for the future.\textsuperscript{11} Amid the chaos of postwar Germany, they are able to relate to each other as human beings.

\textsuperscript{9} Koeppen, Tauben 115; "She believed. In God? In convention. Where was God? God would probably have approved of her black groom. An every-day God. But God was just a holiday God when she was growing up with her mother. Carla was not led to God. For communion she was only brought as far as his table."

\textsuperscript{10} Dietrich Erlach, Wolfgang Koeppen als zeitkritischer Erzähler (Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis: 1973) 170; "in a long tradition of German authors and intellectuals who have always set their hopes on France as the land of the revolution."

\textsuperscript{11} See Erlach. Also Kathleen L. Komar's chapter on Tauben im Gras in Pattern and Chaos. Multilinear Novels by Dos Passos, Döblin, Faulkner, Koeppen (Columbia: Camden, 1983) 73-91. Komar views Odysseus, a black American, and Susanne, a German prostitute, as a "successful union" (83), but I disagree. There is no indication that their union will last, making it a typical liaison between occupying forces and the conquered populace rather than a union of races and cultures.
overcoming prejudices of the past, and are willing to relinquish their families and
countries to begin a new life.

Dietrich Erlach points out that Koeppen's vision of a new society remains
vague and one that does not become realized in the two subsequent novels of his
"trilogy." While Carla's and Washington's child symbolizes this new society,
however vague, it is clear that Koeppen has little hope that it can be realized in
Germany. Koeppen expresses resignation through the central character,
Keetenheuve, in Das Treibhaus (1953) when he says, "die Menschen waren
natürlich dieselben geblieben, sie dachten gar nicht daran, andere zu werden, weil
die Regierungsform wechselte."¹² Because German society is shown as incapable
of change, this child has no place in Germany. Abortion is the only alternative to
leaving the country, but would have to be considered a regression to Nazi ideology
that held that mixed-race children were unworthy of life. For Carla and
Washington, leaving the country to raise the child is progress only on an individual
level, and this is the only plane on which progress is possible.

As in Koeppen's novel, Paul Schallück's novel, Wenn man aufhören könnte
zu lügen (1951),¹³ shows an illegal abortion that is prevented. Thomas Abbt is a
war veteran and former prisoner of war studying at a university. He meets Marion
in a lecture and they begin spending most of their time together, neglecting their

¹² Wolfgang Koeppen, Das Treibhaus, Gesammelte Werke, vol. 2 (1953;
Frankfurt/M: Suhrkamp, 1986) 232; "the people had naturally stayed the same, they had
no intention of changing just because the form of government changed."

¹³ Paul Schallück, Wenn man aufhören könnte zu lügen (1951; Frankfurt/M:
Fischer, 1963).
studies in the process. On a fairly regular basis, though, Marion needs an evening to herself. Thomas learns that she spends these evenings with a carpet dealer who financially supports her and her alcoholic mother. Marion promises Thomas to end the relationship with the salesman and apply for grants and scholarships to finance her studies.

During the summer vacation, Thomas returns home to work in his step-father’s furniture making shop in order to earn money for the next semester as well as to help support Marion. Thomas asks to be paid weekly so he can send Marion money, but his step-father refuses. His step-father would have liked for Thomas to continue the family business. However, Thomas’ father, whom Thomas has never seen, insisted that he study and had been contributing to his support.

When Thomas returns at the end of the summer, Marion is distant and irritable. He is at a loss to understand what is troubling her, and his psychology courses are not helping him. “Bekommt sie ein Kind? Unsinn. So bald kann sie es nicht wissen. Außerdem würde sie es nicht so schwer nehmen. Man kann es ja wegmachen lassen.” One evening after dropping her off at her apartment, he wanders the streets and sees an apparition: the figures of a woman and a little boy standing on the tracks of a train that clears away rubble. When he greets them, the woman answers, “Ich wußte, daß du kommen würdest. Aber du kommst zu

14 Schallück 89; “Is she going to have a baby? Nonsense. She couldn’t know so soon. Anyway, she wouldn’t be taking it so hard. She can always get rid of it.”
spät. Du hättest mich nicht allein lassen sollen.\textsuperscript{15} He rushes back to Marion’s apartment where her neighbor tells him that Marion has just left to get an abortion.

Thomas races after Marion and frantically searches door to door in a seedy area looking for her. He finds her while she is still waiting for the abortionist to arrive. Alan Frank Keele interpretes the long stream of consciousness passage that follows Marion’s rescue as evidence of an “apocalyptic vision.”

Filtered through Thomas Abbt’s keenly sensitive visionary consciousness, the seemingly disparate, individual, fragmented elements of his experience fall into significantly associative juxtaposition: Mental images concerning the abortion evoke memories of Thomas’ war experiences as a machine gunner, for example, which in turn evoke thoughts on the racial murder of a black, the liquidation of undesirables in Siberia, and most horrible of all, the dispassioned development and deployment of thermonuclear bombs, thereby concatenating all such events. Feticide, the first link in the chain thus forged, is also its lowest common denominator -- killing in its most primal form. Anyone who can kill a fetus can kill him- or herself, other humans or the whole human race.\textsuperscript{16}

In the middle of the death and destruction, however, stands Thomas as the hero. While he looks for Marion, he envisions her as a tiny doll lying on an enormous table, threatened by a giant woman with sharp, bloody, knitting needle fingers. “Ich will Marion ihrer Verzweiflung entreißen und den blutigen Stricknadelfingern ein keimendes Leben, ja, das auch, es soll nicht verrecken.”\textsuperscript{17} Almost as

\textsuperscript{15} Schallück 90; “I knew you would come. But you're too late. You shouldn't have left me alone.”


\textsuperscript{17} Schallück 94; “I want to rip Marion out of her despair and a budding life out of the grip of the knitting needle fingers, yes, that too, it shouldn’t die.”
an afterthought, he thinks about saving the baby. As his next mission, he plans for an idyllic family life and calculates how they will manage the money. In his euphoria, he does not notice that Marion is still depressed. He finds out only later that the baby's father is the carpet dealer. Marion had slept with him during the summer when Thomas could not send her money.

Since this novel is more about Thomas coming to terms with his war experience and reconstructing an identity for himself, we can only infer from passing remarks what Marion's motivations are. Marion is driven by practical considerations and she acquired certain survival skills through her own war experiences. She loves Thomas, but she does what is necessary to secure an existence, although she alternatively stresses and downplays the necessity of the money she receives from the carpet dealer. While it is unclear whether she knows the details of Thomas' background, it is clear that she considers having Thomas raise another man's child an untenable situation that can only lead to misery. The triangular situation is reminiscent of Friedrich Hebbel's Maria Magdalene. Despite Thomas' heroic efforts and initial noble stance toward the child, he does make an issue of the child's parentage. Since it is too late for an abortion, Marion falls back on a long tradition of killing herself and the child by jumping off a bridge to drown.

Martin Walser's novel Ehen in Philippsburg (1957)\(^\text{18}\) also borrows heavily from familiar plots to comment on the present. Hans Beumann is a fresh university graduate with a degree in journalism. Armed only with a letter of recommendation

\(^{18}\) Martin Walser, Ehen in Philippsburg (1957; Reinbeck: Rowohlt, 1963).
addressed to the editor of a major newspaper and the address of a university friend who had dropped out of school, he arrives in the "big city" of Philippsburg to make his way in the world. When he is almost out of money and his only job prospect does not come through, his friend Anne's father offers him a job heading the press office of an industry association. Anne is also on the staff. Hans has the degree and is willing to do what he is told, but Anne has the business sense required to make the project succeed.

When Anne becomes pregnant, we learn about Hans' background, which is a tale similar to those from the Weimar Republic. His mother was a waitress in a small-town pub, his father was a surveyor, in town for a few weeks. By the time she knew she was pregnant, they surveyor was gone and did not respond to her letters. She went to a former army medic for an abortion and was told to undress before he would discuss his price. "Und dann habe er etwas von ihr verlangt, was ihr unmöglich gewesen sei, auch unter diesen Umständen unmöglich." The doctors she went to gave her the usual lecture. Hans was born and subsequently ostracized by the town as an illegitimate child.

When Anne mentions marriage, Hans explains how it would work against them. "Listig wand er ihr Sätze um den Kopf, as wären's Girlanden." A forced marriage would always remain a sore point with which they would eventually re-

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19 Walser 81; "And then he demanded something of her that was impossible for her to do, impossible even under these circumstances."

20 Walser 81; "Cunningly, he wound sentences around her head as if they were garlands."
proach each other; it would be like prison for a man who can only live with himself when he is able to choose freely; they would become the target of gossip that she only married him because of the baby and that he intentionally got her pregnant in order to marry into a wealthy family. He promises to marry her -- if she still wants to -- after he has established himself and can support a family. In Walser's version of postwar society, appearances and male ego have replaced financial hardship as the driving force behind the decision to abort.

Anne goes to see Dr. Benrath, a family friend who gives her some pills, some drops and a list of instructions that includes strenuous exercise and copious amounts of wine. Hans accompanies her when a week passes without results. Benrath refuses to perform an abortion because of the risk to his career -- he sits on a committee combating abortion -- but he finally gives them the name of another doctor. This doctor inserts cotton dipped in a caustic solution, which, after nine treatments, also proves ineffective. Hans urges her to keep going back until Anne tells him that the doctor has also been groping her during the examinations. Benrath gives them the name of another doctor, but by this time she is in her fourth month and this new doctor refuses to perform an abortion. Hans manipulates Anne into going back and bribing the doctor. She almost bleeds to death after the abortion, a three-hour ordeal which was performed without anesthesia. While she is recuperating, she tells Hans the story over and over

The novel then moves on from Hans and Anne to focus on Dr. Benrath in a section entitled "Ein Tod muß Folgen haben" ("A Death Must Have Consequences"). The death the title refers to is the suicide of Benrath's wife which occurs toward the end of the section. But by juxtaposing the extremely graphic abortion scene at the end of the first section with the title of the second, Walser structurally connects the two events. For several years, Benrath has been having an affair with one of his wife's friends, Cécile. Despite her saying she can no longer take it and him swearing he will never return, the affair continues. He spouts empty phrases about their relationship being a true marriage and his marriage to Birga only continuing for the sake of appearances. On one meeting, during the inevitable discussion about the hopelessness of their situation, he tells Cécile that the only way he sees for them to be together is if Birga should die. She responds that she had thought of that as well. When he returns home, he discovers Birga has committed suicide by poisoning herself.

In a further structural link to the abortion, Benrath sees Anne and her mother the day after Birga's suicide. Frau Volkmann chattily reports that Anne has recovered from a bout with what Anne told her was "food poisoning" despite refusing to let her call Benrath. Frau Volkmann believes Benrath can help with all sorts of cases. Benrath then recalls a newspaper article he read:

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21 Walser 87; "Hans thought, she did all this for my sake. We've grown very close. Now I'll probably have to marry her."

The method of the infanticide/suicide in the article is the same poison made famous by Friedrich Wolf’s 1929 play. The poison further connects Anne’s abortion with the circumstances of Birga’s death and Benrath’s responsibility for both. While Benrath would not consider divorcing Birga, his infidelity corresponds to the husband in the article abandoning his wife. In this light, the death in the title of this section is the abortion of the previous section; the consequence of the abortion is Birga’s death. Rather than Birga’s death coming as a relief so that Benrath and Cécile could be together, it has its own consequences. Benrath loses Cécile, his practice, and his standing in society.

Despite this interpretation, abortion itself is not the evil for which retribution is exacted. When we compare Anne’s situation with that of Hans’ mother, we see that it is the imposition of one person’s will on another person that must be avenged. The relationship between Hans’ mother and the surveyor occurred during a time in which society assumed that couples who dared to have sex would marry if the woman became pregnant. By abandoning Hans’ mother, the surveyor

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22 Walser 115; “A husband slammed the door to the apartment behind him and yelled to his wife: I’m never coming back to you. The wife ran onto the landing after him with their child and screamed: if you leave me something bad is going to happen. The next day she and the child were found, they were lying on the tile floor in the kitchen, potassium cyanide. The husband was found guilty of the death of his child.”
forced her to have either an abortion or an illegitimate child. Her attempt to have an abortion would have been an emancipatory act, freeing her from the consequences of a relationship with a dishonest man. When the medic tried to force himself on her, Hans’ life was saved, but his mother’s reputation was lost. In a sad twist of the story, Hans eventually becomes the same kind of man his father was.

Hans does not begin the novel this way, however. Since he was raised by his mother on the fringe of society, he has not yet learned to speak the duplicitous speech of men. He studies the way men, especially Benrath, manipulate conversations to achieve their goals and applies these tactics to get Anne to do as he wishes. Hans eventually becomes accepted by the male society of Philippsburg and is initiated into their private club.

The women, on the other hand, speak honestly but are powerless to implement their desires in the face of men’s manipulations. Their 1950s desires revolve around securing their futures by acquiring men to support them and their children. Abortion, when imposed by a man, is a wrong that must be avenged. When chosen by a woman, abortion can be a rebellion against patriarchy. But in this novel, women’s will is crushed at every turn.

Like Koeppen and Walser, Heinrich Böll takes on hypocrisy in his novel Ansichten eines Clowns (1963). Böll also attacks former Nazis who have found democracy, but his main focus is the double standards of religion, particularly

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Catholicism. Marie’s abortion is mentioned only briefly in the book, but it is central to understanding the distrust expressed in the novel of a morality that drives people apart and results in unhappiness.

The novel is narrated from Hans’ perspective. Thus, any information about feelings Marie may have about their relationship or the abortions is second-hand. Hans is also not particularly perceptive. As a self-professed collector of moments (Augenblicke), he collects only those which have meaning for him, not necessarily those which might have meaning for her. He assumes, however, that their interests are the same. This fact makes gaps in the information all the more important.

From the first time Hans and Marie had sex, he considers her his natural wife and takes monogamy seriously. As was mentioned in Chapter 1, natural law assumes that man is inherently good. Marie gives up her education to move in with him. To support her, he begins taking jobs as a clown, and later, with Marie constantly by his side, makes a good living from his performances. Their common-law marriage is a sore point with Marie, a devout Catholic, and Hans relates how embarrassed and defensive she becomes whenever landlords or hotel clerks find out. They had talked about marriage, and Hans was prepared to convert to Catholicism -- not because he believed in it, but because he knew that it was important to her. The marriage never comes about, however, because he objects not to the church ceremony but to the required civil ceremony. He can reject the authority of the Catholic Church, a spiritual institution, to control his
thoughts, since he lives by what he believes is a more consistent moral code. However, the state, a legal entity, does have the power to control his actions. As he resists all forms of external influence, he cannot submit to enslavement by a civil institution. Since their marriage is recognized by neither the church nor the state, Marie cannot reconcile herself to having illegitimate children.

Marie receives medical treatment for three miscarriages. Their Catholic friends (most of their friends are Catholic because they are her friends) become suspicious that these may not have been true miscarriages and make veiled and sometimes biting comments about Marie and Hans still being childless. Since Hans learns about the miscarriages only after the fact, he must rely on Marie’s accounts of them. With the first miscarriage, Hans returns from a performance to find blood on the sheets and a note from Marie saying she was at the hospital. Hans tries to see her, but she discusses the miscarriage with a priest, not with Hans. He is genuinely worried about her health, but does not delve into either her emotions or his own. As a gesture of compassion and apparently oblivious to the biblical allusion, he washes the blood from the sheets so she will not be reminded of it when she returns. After the second miscarriage, he relates that she was “so herunter, nervös, rannte dauernd in die Kirche.”

We learn nothing about whether they use contraception; he never mentions it and we must assume that she would not use it due to her religious convictions.

We also learn little about the third miscarriage, which is clearly an abortion.

\[24 \text{Böll 97; “... so run down, agitated, constantly ran to church.”}\]
Sie hatte keine regelrechte Fehlgeburt gehabt, aber irgend etwas dieser Art. Ich war nicht genau dahinter gekommen, und keiner hatte es mir erklärt. Sie hatte jedenfalls geglaubt, sie sei schwanger, war es jetzt nicht mehr, sie war nur ein paar Stunden am Morgen im Krankenhaus gewesen. Sie war blaß, müde und gereizt [. . .]. Ich hätte gern Näheres gewußt, ob sie Schmerzen gehabt hatte, aber sie sagte mir nichts, weinte nur manchmal, aber auf eine mir ganz fremde, gereizte Art.²⁵

His concerns revolve around her health, but he remains blissfully ignorant about the causes for her sadness. The abortion was a problem she saw as her own, one she could not expect Hans to help her with. "Ich bat sie auch, mir doch genau zu erklären, was sie im Krankenhaus mit ihr gemacht hatten, sie sagte es wäre eine 'Frauensache' gewesen, 'harmlos, aber scheußlich.'²⁶ He actually goes to the library to look up information on the female reproductive system and seems satisfied and relieved. He becomes confused again when the morality police (Sittenpolizei) arrives to question him saying, "gewisse Stichproben müssen wir schon machen, wenn Durchreisende abortive -- sie hustete -- Erkrankungen haben."²⁷ He had no idea what the official was talking about. "Ich weiß bis heute nicht, was mit ihr los gewesen war und welche Komplikationen die Frauensache

²⁵ Böll 120; "She didn't have a regular miscarriage, but something like that. I didn't quite understand and no one explained it to me. In any case, she had thought that she was pregnant, but wasn't anymore, she was just in the hospital for a few hours that morning. She was pale, tired and irritated [. . .]. I would have liked to have known some details, whether she was in pain, but she didn't say anything, just cried some, but in a strange, irritated way."

²⁶ Böll 124; "I even asked her to explain to me exactly what they did to her in the hospital, she said it was a 'female thing, harmless but horrid.'"

²⁷ Böll 125; "We do have to make a certain number of spot-checks whenever travelers have abortive -- she cleared her throat -- illnesses."
ihr gemacht hatte." Marie eventually leaves Hans to marry her old boyfriend from school, who in the meantime has become a leading lay figure in the church. After Marie leaves, Hans' career collapses.

Böll brings up the familiar troubles of families with many children, but he does so within the context of the Church, not the state as in the Weimar Republic. Hans tells of friends, Klaus and Sabine, who always seem to have another baby on the way. Klaus is a teacher, and the money he makes is just not enough to support them. Klaus and his wife draw up elaborate tables to track and predict her fertile days so that they can avoid sex during that window -- the only acceptable method of birth control for Catholics. However, this method is responsible for (at least) their fourth child. Hans notes the way Sabine looks at Klaus, full of reproach for her condition.

How Marie is able to reconcile the abortion(s) or even living with Hans without the benefit of marriage with her beliefs is not discussed. Marie is the one Catholic Hans does not reproach for hypocrisy. While he is blind to her contradictions, he sees hypocrisy in how their friends accept her while she is living with him and after she has left him for another man. Hans considers his definition of monogamous marriage fully compatible with the Bible and believes that Marie's sin lay not in living with him, rather in her marriage to Tüpfer. By marrying Tüpfer, she had become an adulteress in Hans' eyes.

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28 Böll 124; "To this day I have no idea what was wrong with her and what kind of complications this female thing caused her."
Keele interprets Marie's abortion as the crucifixion of Christ in utero. Keele views the passage in which Hans sees a young boy who is walking in the street "mit einem Gesichtsausdruck, wie ich ihn auf Bildern von den Heiligen Drei Königen gesehen habe, die dem Jesuskind Weihrauch, Gold und Myrrhe hinhalten"\(^{29}\) as a representation of the adoration of the Magi.

To Hans' visionary way of thinking, however, the matter is painfully clear: Marie falls because she failed to develop an interior moral code and flees back to the supposed safety of an exterior one. [ . . . ] Despite, or precisely because of exterior 'thou-shalt-nots,' the interior system has failed.\(^{30}\)

While Keele sees Hans the clown as a visionary, someone "keenly attuned to [ . . . ] higher significance,"\(^{31}\) Hans is also a fool in the literal sense who cannot see the truth in front of his face until it is too late. While he prides himself on his eye for details, he fails to notice the signs that even the first two miscarriages were likely self-induced abortions. When he washes the blood off the sheets after the first miscarriage, he also washes his hands of responsibility for the abortions. If Marie has "failed to develop an interior moral code," Hans is partly to blame for abandoning her emotionally and assuming that she believes as he does. By choosing to remain ignorant of Marie's feelings and emotional needs, he loses her.

If we extend Keele's reading of biblical images to its logical conclusion, Hans' washing of the bloody sheets must then be equated with Pontius Pilate

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\(^{29}\) Böll 120-21; "with an expression on his face like the one I've seen on pictures of the three Magi offering gold, frankincense and myrrh to the baby Jesus."

\(^{30}\) Keele 119.

\(^{31}\) Keele 118.
washing his hands of the blood of Christ; Hans is nevertheless responsible for Marie's abortion. Pilate (in the character of Hans) would then represent the patriarchal state whose self-imposed ignorance of "female things" leaves women on the fringe to fend for themselves. Marie, as an unmarried woman, has no business becoming pregnant, and the state does not really care how she manages to stay childless as long as she does so without causing alarm.

Koeppen and Böll, who both wrote before the beginning of what is known as the second German women's movement in the late 1960s, showed women caught between conforming to and breaking out of traditional modes of behavior. Carla first works for her country during the war, then works after the war to benefit herself. Her choice of jobs may have been dictated by the desire to snag a mate -- a strategy similar to the Cinderella dreams we found stereotyped in the Weimar Republic. She returns to what she hopes to be a traditional role by quitting her job and moving in with Washington. It is significant that the only landlady willing to accept the interracial couple rents mostly to prostitutes. When the similarities between American and Nazi bigotry become clear, Carla realizes that a life with Washington will not conform to the traditional model and uses the survival skills she acquired during the war to assert her independence by seeking an abortion. Both her dream of a traditional marriage and the possibility of independence are cut off, so she exchanges them for a utopian vision of racial harmony.

Marie initially discards the formal aspects of a traditional marriage -- home, ring, children -- in favor of a relationship with a "soul mate." Her religious faith
remains strong but conflicts with her life. Ultimately, she returns to the confines of a traditional role with the approval of the Pope himself. Her faith and life are back in harmony, but, if we are to believe Hans, her heart is not. Both situations demonstrate the constraints patriarchal society place on women's choices.

However much abortion is about women -- their bodies, their desires -- these early postwar novels, all written by men, are more about the male characters. They appear either as saviors who rescue women from back-alley butchers, or as men who through devious means or through ignorance drive women to seek abortions, or even as a combination of both. There is a wide gulf between the male and female worlds and the male characters are shown to have little inclination to learn what their partners want or feel.

The situations presented in these works are all similar in that they involve couples reacting to the postwar world. In this they differ from Weimar and Storm and Stress works which focused more on women as helpless victims of men and/or women's battle against class inequities and societal norms. These postwar women are still all single. Unlike their earlier counterparts they are less concerned about the child's legitimacy or affording food than they are about incorporating a child into their lives with their chosen partners. Thus, even before the liberalization of abortion laws, these novels are about choice with all its complexities and questions but no answers.

Significantly absent from literary consideration are other equally typical situations of the immediate postwar era. Schallück touches on some of these in
the peripheral figures of Bärbel and Renate, both of whom were raped by soldiers during the war. Widows or unmarried women with “furlough babies” and the experience of Trümmerfrauen likewise found their way into early postwar literature at the most as peripheral figures. Their stories are only now being researched and depicted.

Each novel connects abortion in some way with Nazi war atrocities. The mixed-race child in Koeppen’s Tauben im Gras, the war imagery in Schallück’s Wenn man aufhören könnte zu lügen, rejection of Nazism and Catholicism as artificial ideological constructs that require blind obedience in Böll’s Ansichten eines Clowns, and the manipulative and coercive use of language in Walser’s Ehen in Philippsburg make the reader confront his or her own beliefs on many different levels within the context of historical events. But at the same time, these works do not try to sway the reader; they so set themselves apart from their precursors of the Storm and Stress and Weimar periods.

From the New Women’s Movement to Reunification

Historical Background

The “new” or “second” women’s movement in West Germany arose along-side the left-wing student protests of 1968. The German movement, like its counterparts in other countries, saw as its first task the solution of the children’s question (Kinderfrage), which Lottemi Doormann defines as “die besondere Zuständigkeit der Frauen für die Kindererziehung und die Reproduktionsaufgaben und damit zusammenhängend ihre herkömmliche Rolle als stetig zur Verfügung

stehende Hilfskraft, attraktive Bettgenossin und Bewunderin männlicher
Glanzleistungen [. . .].” Along with the movement's call for a reform of child care,
both within the family and in the public sphere, women also demanded the right to
freely choose or refuse motherhood. Alice Schwarzer, who later founded the
feminist journal Emma, spearheaded the German version of a French campaign
against abortion laws. Schwarzer convinced Stern magazine in 1971 to publish a
statement signed by 374 women who admitted having had an abortion. This
public statement caused a sensation that put abortion policy back into public
debate.

In a move that came as a surprise to East German women, the government
of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) introduced the Fristenregelung in 1972
in the wave of its gift policy (Geschenkpolitik). The vote to change the law was
astounding because, for the first time in the history of the East German Parliament
(Volkskammer), a vote was not unanimous -- 14 members voted against the
legislation and eight abstained. Abortion was permitted without questions or
justifications within the first trimester of pregnancy. The new law was part of the
ruling Socialist Unity Party’s (SED) family policy designed to make living, working,
and having children at the same time as easy as possible by allowing women to

Anfang der 80er Jahre,” Geschichte der deutschen Frauenbewegung, ed. Florence Hervé
(Köl: Pahl Rugenstein, 1980) 256; “women’s special responsibility for raising children and
reproductive duties which also entails her customary role as a constantly available
assistant, attractive bed partner, and admirer of male stellar achievements.”

determine the timing and number of children. The government also offered an impressive package of social services for working mothers, including 26 weeks of maternity leave and up to a year off to raise the child, both on close to full pay; employment guarantees and pension contributions; free day- and after-school-care; the housekeeping day (Haushaltstag), a paid day each month to take care of household chores and errands; even the privilege to bypass lines in certain stores for mothers of three or more children. In return, it was hoped that families would have as many children as possible. One family law specialist, Anita Grandke, stated, "Der dauernde Verzicht auf Kinder, auch die gewollte Beschränkung auf ein Kind, ist moralisch in der Regel nicht gerechtfertigt -- und allezuoft Ausdruck einer kleinbürgerlichen Haltung,"\textsuperscript{34} "kleinbürgerlich" in this sense being almost synonymous with subversive.

The West German Parliament (Bundestag), led by a Social Democratic (SPD)/Free Democratic (FDP) coalition, passed a reform of Article 218 on June 18, 1974. This version was similar to the GDR's Fristenreglung and represented "eine Ablösung des früher geltenden allgemeinen Abtreibungsverbots durch eine differenzierte Regelung des sog. Schwangerschaftsabbruchs."\textsuperscript{35} However, it called for mandatory counseling before the abortion could take place. Baden-

\textsuperscript{34} Quoted in "Die sind" 74; "The continued unwillingness to have children, even consciously limiting oneself to one child is not normally morally justifiable -- and all too often the expression of a petit-bourgeois attitude."

\textsuperscript{35} Karl Lackner, ed., Strafgesetzbuch mit Erläuterungen, 17th ed. (München: Beck, 1987) 894; "a replacement of the general prohibition of abortion previously in effect by a differentiated solution of so-called termination of pregnancy."
Württemberg's Christian Democratic (CDU) government asked the Constitutional Court (Verfassungsgericht) to review the law for constitutionality as well as for a last-minute injunction "zur Vermeidung schwerer Nachteile für das Gemeinwohl" until the case could be decided. Both requests were granted.

In February of 1975, the Constitutional Court, comprised of seven men and one woman, voted five to three to declare the Fristenregelung unconstitutional. The lone woman voted with the minority. They based their decision on Article 2, Paragraph 2, Sentence 1 of the Basic Law (Grundgesetz), which states, "Jeder hat das Recht auf Leben und körperliche Unversehrtheit." The justices interpreted the Basic Law to include the fetus in all stages of development, and placed its right above any right the woman might have to make decisions about her body. The majority opinion stated, "Durch die völlige Aufhebung der Strafbarkeit ist eine Schutzlücke entstanden, welche die Sicherung des sich entwickelnden Lebens in einer nicht geringen Anzahl von Fällen gänzlich beseitigt, indem es dieses Leben der völlig freien Verfügungsgewalt der Frau ausliefert." The justices also referred to the perversion of the abortion law by the Nazis.

36 Quoted in "Lenkende Kraft," Spiegel 26/1974: 20; "to prevent serious detriment to the common good."

37 Grundgesetz mit Deutschlandvertrag, Menschenrechtskonvention, Bundeswahlgesetz, Parteiengesetz, 18th ed. (München: Beck, 1976) 30; "Everyone shall have the right to life and to inviolability of his person" (translation published by the Press and Information Office of the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany).

38 Quoted in Monika Maron, "Letzter Zugriff auf die Frau," Spiegel 20/1990: 90; "The complete suspension of the criminal nature [of abortion] has allowed a loophole to develop that, in a not insignificant number of cases, completely eliminates the protection of the developing life in that it leaves this life entirely at the disposal of the woman."
A modified, constitutionally acceptable version of Article 218 went into effect on May 18, 1976. This version, "die zwar an dem grundsätzlichen Verbot des Schwangerschaftsabbruchs festgehalten, aber die seit langem in der Diskussion befindlichen Indikationen bis hin zur sozialen Indikation anerkannt hat," remained in effect in West Germany until after unification. It allowed courts to refrain from punishing a woman for having an abortion if she finds herself "in besonderer Bedrängnis."

The law did not make abortion legal, but it did detail the conditions under which a termination would not be prosecuted. It permitted the medical justification without time limits to save the life or preserve the health of the mother. Under the eugenic indication, an abortion is permitted within 22 weeks if a high degree of probability exists that the child would suffer from an incurable condition. A curable congenital disease may be grounds for an abortion under certain conditions. Under the criminological indication, a woman may terminate the pregnancy within 12 weeks if she was raped and it must be assumed that the pregnancy resulted from that crime. And finally, with the hardship or the social indication (Notlagen- oder soziale Indikation), a woman may have an abortion within 12 weeks in order to prevent critical circumstances which cannot be remedied in any other reasonable way. Drug abuse by the mother and danger of suicide fall into the

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39 Lackner 895; "which retained the fundamental prohibition of pregnancy termination but recognizes the long-discussed indications up to and including the social indication."

40 Strafgesetzbuch (StGB) §218 Absatz 3; "in extraordinary distress."
category of permissible justifications for an abortion, but incest and spousal rape do not.\footnote{Lackner 907-09.}

Except in medical emergencies, the woman was required to consult with a doctor prior to the procedure. The doctor, who was not to perform the abortion, had to discuss the type of procedure, its possible consequences, and future methods of contraception. But it was also the doctor’s duty “über die ethische Bedeutung der Vernichtung ungeborenen Lebens aufzuklären.”\footnote{Lackner 914; “to explain the ethical import of the destruction of unborn life.”} For the social indications, the woman also had to meet with a social worker to discuss available public and private assistance for pregnant women, mothers, and children that would facilitate the continuance of the pregnancy. Women also had to be informed of the illegality of abortion in general.\footnote{Lackner 914.} After the counseling session, a three-day waiting period was imposed before the procedure could take place.

Despite its utopian intentions, many were dissatisfied with the \textit{Fristenregulierung} of the former GDR. Counseling was offered in theory, but in practice often consisted of asking whether the woman wanted to keep the child. An assembly line atmosphere bothered patients and health care workers alike. Reports also surfaced of discrimination on the job as a result of the woman’s boss finding out about the abortion through insurance inquiries.\footnote{“Die sind” 82.} Doctors complained of women
using abortion as a means of contraception instead of as a last resort when other methods had failed. But as bad as the system may have been, East German women did not want the western version.

The reality with the Federal Republic's *Indikationsregelung* was also very different from what the Constitutional Court intended. A certain amount of leeway allowed by the court's decision led to vast regional variations in granting abortions, particularly under the social indication. In conservative, rural, Catholic Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg it was almost impossible to obtain permission, whereas in the North, the ruling was treated almost like abortion on demand.

**Literary Reflections of (Almost) Legal Abortions**

Despite the vast changes in the societies of both countries brought about during the 1970s by the women's movement and the respective liberalization of Article 218, it was not until the early 1980s that authors again adopted abortion as a theme of literature. Women authors, surprisingly, are largely silent on the subject. However, the absence of female voices may be due less to women not writing about it than to works by women not being published. As Jeannette Clausen points out,

Developments in postwar West German literature, then clearly did not favor women writers or "emancipatory" themes. [. . .] A writer's politics were as important a factor as gender in terms of her literary reception. Women who wrote explicitly about female experience probably had an additional handicap. [. . .] The reality of the recent German past was too close and too complex; the myth of equal opportunity was too great; there was no public forum to provide a context for valuing women's experiences specifically or even for acknowledging what now seems obvious, to feminists, at
least: that women and men experience the world differently and that experience shapes what we see.\textsuperscript{45}

Artistic production and human reproduction are the subjects of Günter Grass' book, \textit{Kopfgeburten, oder die Deutschen sterben aus} (1980),\textsuperscript{46} that alternates between direct commentary on current events, planning a new story, and the story itself. The principal characters of the fictional part, the Peters, are a typical, modern, dual-career couple; both teach geography and a foreign language at a small town preparatory school. They sympathize with the Greens, but are also pragmatic about the upstart party and want to work with a party that has influence. Dörte is active in the Free Democratic Party, which is part of the ruling coalition in Parliament with the Social Democratic Party, to which Harm belongs. Harm is a representative in the city council; Dörte supports him by making speeches to women's groups -- a two-for-one political team. They have a busy, full life. While they plan to have children some day, the time has never been quite right.

Dörte was pregnant once, but they decided together that they were not ready and that it would be for the best for Dörte to have an abortion. It was not a tragedy; a child was just something that did not yet fit into their plans. Their concerns about bringing a child into the world revolve not only around their own practical situation -- whether they have enough room, particularly if Harm's aging


\textsuperscript{46} Günter Grass, \textit{Kopfgeburten, oder die Deutschen sterben aus} (Darmstadt: Luchterhand, 1980).
mother should come to live with them, whether they are emotionally prepared to care for a child, whether the child could be immunized against malaria in order for them to take their planned trip to Asia -- but also involve politics. Their worries include overpopulation in the Third World, atomic power plants in the area, and the thought of Franz Josef Strauss of Bavaria's conservative Christian Socialist Union Party possibly becoming Chancellor. By connecting such exaggerated, external concerns to the personal decision, Grass pokes fun at over-analyzed rationality.

While deciding what the Peters will do next, Grass toys with the idea of being a dictator and delineates his platform in the book as well. The last plank in his platform is to ease the burden on teachers. To accomplish this, he proposes abolishing the privileged position teachers possess as governmental employees (Beamte).

Hiermit gebe ich [...] diesen armen, seit Jahrzehnten um jedes Risiko betroffenen Menschen die Freiheit wieder. Nie wieder sollen sie hoffnungslos bis an ihr Lebensende versorgt sein. Sie sollen sich nicht mehr ihrer Privilegien schämen müssen. In Zukunft darf kein Vorrecht sie isolieren. Endlich dürfen auch sie vom süßen Wagnis Leben kosten.\(^\text{47}\)

The "sweet venture of life" includes daring to bring a new life into the world.

Dörte and Harm are afraid of not being able to control all the variables in their life. As a government employee, Dörte does not need to fear for her position. Her maternity leave is generous and regulated by law. With Harm's salary and her

\(^{47}\) Grass 90; "Herewith I restore to these poor people, who for decades have been robbed of any risk, their freedom. Never again will they be hopelessly cared for until the end of their days. Never again will they have to be ashamed of their privileges. In the future, no prerogative shall be permitted to isolate them. They, too, will finally be permitted to taste the sweet venture of life."
maternity benefits, they are financially secure. Indeed, they are in the ideal situation to have children. But they are too secure to venture a disruption of their already hectic lives. On the one hand, they want to, but on the other, there are a thousand reasons to postpone having children. And this from people who were born under the most tenuous of circumstances amid the rubble of war-torn Germany. In their wrangling back and forth, weighing pros and cons, Grass criticizes the indecision and lack of courage of a generation grown soft on the economic miracle.

Christoph Hein’s novella, first published in the GDR as Der fremde Freund (1982) and released in the FRG under the title Drachenblut,\(^{48}\) also shows a woman afraid of intrusion into her well-controlled life. It is unusual for works thus far in that it is written in the first person. Claudia tells the story of her relationship with Henry. While the confessional form offers her the opportunity to reflect on her life, she does not use it. Instead, she relates facts and leaves it to the reader to make the connections.

Claudia is divorced, in her 40s, and lives alone in an anonymous apartment complex (Wohnblock). She is a physician in a clinic, but treats only the illness, not the person. “Ich kann Tabletten verschreiben und Spritzen geben. Der Rest ist nicht Sache der Medizin.”\(^{49}\) Her hobby is photography; her pictures are sterile images of leafless trees, empty spaces. After she develops the pictures, she files

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\(^{48}\) Christoph Hein, Drachenblut (Berlin: Aufbau, 1982).

\(^{49}\) Hein 85; “I can prescribe pills and give shots. The rest is not part of medicine.”
them away. None hang in her apartment, and she does not discuss why she chooses the images she does. She has individual acquaintances, not a circle of friends, and she avoids delving too much into their personal lives. She keeps her work separate from her home, her home separate from her family, her family separate from her friends.

Her life begins to change somewhat when Henry, who lives down the hall, disrupts her space -- literally by barging into her apartment as well as figuratively by making her care about him. He is separated from his wife who lives in another city with their children. Claudia carefully schedules the time with him to maintain her compartmentalized life. Theirs is the "perfekte Beispiel eines emanzipierten Verhältnisses [. . .], d.h. eines funktionalen Verhältnisses frei von emotionalen Verstrickungen und Verpflichtungen, ohne Eindringen in die Intimsphäre." However, Henry does begin to infiltrate her various, separate spheres. He shows up unannounced while she is on vacation (the same place every year) and meets the people she knows there. He accompanies her on a weekend visit to the town she grew up in, and she even takes him home to meet her parents for New Year's Eve. However, David Roberts reveals these events to be devoid of meaning as they represent an "Überlebensmentalität [. . .], die durch Gefühlskälte,

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60 David Roberts, "Das Auge der Kamera. Christoph Heins Drachenblut," Spätmoderne und Postmoderne. Beiträge zur deutschsprachigen Gegenwartsliteratur, ed. Paul Michael Lützeler (Frankfurt/M: Fischer, 1991) 241; "perfect example of an emancipated relationship [. . .], i.e. a functional relationship free of emotional entanglements and obligations, without infiltration into the intimate sphere."
Verweigerung langzeitlicher emotioneller Bindungen, ein Gefühl der Ohnmacht
und eine zurückweichende Abwehrhaltung des Ich charakterisiert werden kann.\textsuperscript{51}

Claudia relates that she had two abortions while she was married. The first
occurred while she and her husband were both still students "und hatten andere
Sorgen."\textsuperscript{52} She provides no further justification or information. The second was
shortly before she left her husband. She simply did not want the child when she
knew she was going to leave him. "Er tat mir leid, aber das war schließlich kein
Grund, ein Kind zu bekommen."\textsuperscript{53} She had the abortion without consulting her
husband, apparently without even telling him she was pregnant. Her explanations
reveal an analytical attitude toward abortion that springs from her desire to
maintain a strict division between emotion and action.

She also never felt involved in either of her pregnancies. They were ex-
ternal events beyond her control. The control lies with the man who can cause a
pregnancy against the will of the woman, turning her into an object, a receptacle or
an incubator for his embryo. The passage that follows these sentiments, as David
Robinson points out,\textsuperscript{54} is really the description of a rape.

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\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{51} Roberts 234; "survival mentality [. . .], that can be characterized by emotional
coldness, refusal to enter into long-term emotional bonds, a feeling of powerlessness and
a retreating defensive stance of the self." Roberts quotes Christopher Lasch's \textit{The
survivor as "consist[ing] of isolated acts and events" (234).
\item \textsuperscript{52} Hein 76; "and had other worries."
\item \textsuperscript{53} Hein 77; "I felt sorry for him, but ultimately that was no reason to have a child."
\item \textsuperscript{54} David Robinson, "Abortion as Repression in Christoph Hein's \textit{The Distant Lover},"
\end{itemize}
Ich hatte kein Kind gewollt, und er konnte es dennoch in mir entstehen lassen. Ich blieb ungefragt, ich zählte nicht, ich war nicht beteiligt, ich war das Objekt. Während er mir ins Ohr flüsterte, stöhnte, Liebesbetreuungen wiederholte, entschied er über mich, meinen Körper, mein weiteres Leben. Ein monströser Eingriff, der meine ganze Zukunft bestimmen sollte, ein Eingriff in meine Freiheit.\(^{55}\)

Robinson goes on to say it would seem that by having an abortion she is asserting her personal freedom but that her description of the abortion also takes on the qualities of a rape by borrowing from the above scene as well as from the scene when Henry rapes her in the woods. Even in the process of rebelling against patriarchy by depriving it of offspring, she again becomes a passive victim.

Robinson concludes, then, that the abortion “thus becomes part of a pattern of real violence inflicted upon Claudia since her childhood, violence she compulsively helps to perpetuate. Her feminist rhetoric of self-determination and self-sufficiency stands exposed as a pemicious ideological construct.”\(^{56}\) However, Barbara Johnson notes that violence is inherent in the abortion decision. “The choice is not between violence and nonviolence, but between simple violence to a fetus and complex, less determinate violence to an involuntary mother and/or an unwanted child.”\(^{57}\)

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\(^{55}\) Hein 77; “I didn't want a child, and he could make it happen in me anyway. I wasn't asked, I didn't count, I wasn't involved, I was the object. While he whispered into my ear, groaned, repeated assertions of love, he decided about me, my body, my future life. A monstrous invasion that would determine my entire future, an invasion of my freedom.”

\(^{56}\) Robinson 76.

Like many authors, Hein ties childbirth to creativity, but he does so in an interesting way. Claudia rejects motherhood because it is something she cannot control. She can, however, control her photography. She particularly enjoys watching her pictures develop in the darkroom. "Ein Keimen, das ich bewirke, steuere, das ich unterbrechen kann. Zeugung. Eine Chemie von entstehendem Leben, an dem ich beteiligt bin. Anders als bei meinen Kindern, meinen ungeborenen Kindern. Ich hatte nie das Gefühl beteiligt zu sein." However, the only way she is able to control the process of childbirth is through termination, which she repeats here by invoking "her children." She first animates them into being by calling them her children only to destroy them again by adding the modifier "unborn." Here the violence is combined with control. Unlike in photography, there are many aspects of a child's personality over which a parent has no influence. With her pictures, Claudia can choose the composition and content in advance and develop them when she sees fit. The outcome is predestined, she knows what the picture will look like; there are no surprises. "Ihre Schwangerschaftsunterbrechungen sind das extremste Beispiel ihrer selbstverletzenden

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58 Hein 76; "A germination that I cause, steer, that I can interrupt. Creation. A chemistry of developing life in which I am involved. It was different with my children, my unborn children. I never had the feeling I was involved."

Selbstkontrolle, ihrer Distanz zu sich selbst, deren Ursprung und Folge die Gefühlskälte ist.  

Once she has developed the pictures, Claudia files them away. By encapsulating her pictures, as she does with her memories and most other aspects of her life, she immediately distances herself from them and creates a false sense of being involved in the pictures. The pictures mean no more to her than pictures taken by someone else. The creative moment becomes sterile. While she expresses hope that there is “something” in her pictures -- a deeper meaning she has not yet discovered -- she will never know because they remain unexamined.

When Henry dies in a barroom brawl over his hat, she is unable to mourn his death or even to admit she suffered a loss at all. A colleague of Henry’s brings her the hat as something to remember him by, but she throws it away. She then toys with the idea of adopting an orphaned girl, but she knows that she would be doing it to fill the void within herself. Adoption is another way of circumventing the loss of control over her body and at least somewhat controlling the outcome of the birth process. Instead, she decides to think about getting a dog. Her willingness to “settle” for a dog (an ersatz child) shows that what she seeks is the unconditional love she experienced with her childhood friend and with her uncle without the all-encompassing commitments of having a child. When she tries to reassure her mother that she is fine, her words are cannot convey significant meaning: “Ich bin

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60 Roberts 241; “Her abortions are the most extreme example of her self-destructive self-control, the distance to herself, the source and consequence of which is emotional coldness.”
mit meiner Wohnung zufrieden. Meine Haut ist in Ordnung. Was mir Spaß macht, kann ich mir leisten. Ich bin gesund. Alles was ich erreichen konnte, habe ich erreicht. Ich wüßte nichts, was mir fehlt. Ich habe es geschafft. Mir geht es gut."\(^{61}\) Her attempt to portray herself as a happy, whole person by juxtaposing unconnected statements fails. The paratactic barrage only demonstrates further how fragmented her life is.

One question, while unposed, hovers at the edges of this novel. The question of the good of the child -- whether, as Weimar doctors reasoned, everything would work itself out once the baby was born -- remains unanswered. Would the child complete the change in Claudia that Henry began and enable her to integrate the dissociated segments of her life into a meaningful whole and recapture that sense of unconditional love or would the child wind up emotionally crippled because of an emotionally disengaged mother? Is the child "better off" not being born to a woman apparently incapable of caring for it? This question goes beyond the legality or illegality of abortion and goes to what for many is the crux of the issue. One could point to events in the novella that could support either opinion. Yet, the question is as unanswerable within the context of the novella as it is in real life.

\(^{61}\) Hein 156; "I'm satisfied with my apartment. My skin is all right. I can afford doing what I think is fun. I'm healthy. I've achieved everything I could. I don't know of anything that's missing. I've made it. I'm fine."
Charlotte Worgitzky’s *Meine ungeborenen Kinder* (1982)\(^{62}\) portrays abortion stories from the GDR as told by an actress who is playing the role of Mutter Fent in Friedrich Wolf’s *Cyankali*. The novel alternates between third person narrative about the production of the play and the first person narrative of Martha speaking to her current lover about the abortions she has had. The play serves as an occasion to provide an overview of abortion practice in the GDR both before and after abortion was legalized in 1972. The novel is supportive of reproductive rights for women, but is also critical of policies and attitudes of the government, the medical profession.

The sections in which Martha tells her story are in monologue form. Her purported audience is her current partner. He never speaks, nor do we even learn his name, but Martha occasionally reminds the reader of his presence by addressing him directly. These monologue sections are reminiscent of the transcripts prepared by Maxie Wander in *Guten Morgen, du Schöne*, which pioneered documentary authenticity in the social realism of the GDR.\(^{63}\) The monologue serves as a confession of sorts by which she hopes to make her partner, and by extension the reader, understand the reasons behind her commitment for the play and support of reproductive rights.

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The story of her seven pregnancies, only one of which she carried to term, connects the historical play with the GDR from the 1960s through the early 1970s. Five of the six abortions were performed illegally, some by gynecologists, some by doctors in other fields, and one was successfully self-induced. Her attempts at self-induced abortion, which included hot foot baths, drinking red wine spiced with cloves, and a preparation concocted of ingredients she purchased from the pharmacy, demonstrate how persistent medical myths can be and the extent to which young women in the 1960s were still uninformed about their bodies. The parallels to Hete’s abortion attempts in Cyankali are evident in a method Martha used several times that involved injecting distilled water into her uterus. This is similar to the method Hete used in the play when she filled a gynecological syringe with a soap solution. The doctor who first performed this procedure on Martha remarked that using soap solution could be dangerous. Some of Martha’s other potions also remind us of Helene’s concoction in Vicki Baum’s Helene Willfüer and of Guste’s exotic remedy in Alfred Döblin’s Die Ehe. Martha’s example shows that the reality for women faced with an unwanted pregnancy had changed little from the 1920s.

Martha addresses this fact in an article the theater manager asked her to write for the program. By describing the play as a work that has relevance for women of the present, and not just a historical piece illustrating the virtue of the

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64 Each of her pregnancies was also about a month farther along than she had calculated. Her miscalculations resulted in at least two of the abortions falling in the second trimester.
current system, she crosses the line of tolerable criticism. The manager objects to her direct comparison of the horrors of the Weimar Republic with official policies of the GDR, even if those policies were subsequently changed. Against her express wishes, he deletes these references from her article in the printed program. The actress playing Hete, who is too young to have been affected by the old law, writes an article as well. Her contribution, a short piece that Martha criticizes as shallow, glorifies the current system and expresses relief that she will never have to experience oppression of that kind. Her article is accepted without revision. Although even Martha’s uncensored piece ultimately supports the current law, the government, as represented by the manager of the state-run theater, is shown to be guilty of cowardice and whitewashing the past.

Criticism of the way abortions are carried out in the GDR after legalization also come to light in this novel. The assembly-line atmosphere, doctors criticizing some patients, other patients receiving only minimal counseling are issues addressed in the book which were reported in the West only after unification.\textsuperscript{65} Worgitzky also shows the demeaning way with which women were treated in the hospital. Despite the law that guarantees women the freedom to choose the number and timing of their children, Worgitzky shows a system still filled with prejudice that tries to make women feel guilty about exercising this right.

Like the single women in the works from the Weimar Republic, Martha’s multiple abortions leave her open to criticism of her morals. By the 1960s and

\textsuperscript{65} See “Die sind.”
1970s, when the novel takes place, both single motherhood and the use of contraceptives had become more common and more accepted. Indeed, most of the novels in the early postwar period also portrayed single women. However, the sheer number of abortions and her seeming lack of concern for the health risks as well as the lack of measures to prevent future pregnancies hardly make the audience sympathetic to her pleas for tolerance and understanding for women in similar situations. It could be for this reason that the novel has been largely ignored by critics.

Dieter Wellershoff’s Der Sieger nimmt alles (1983)\textsuperscript{66} tells the story of Ulrich Vogtmann, an orphan and an aimless university student in the 1960s, who was waiting “daß etwas geschah, ein Ereignis, das Bedeutung für ihn gewann und sein Leben veränderte, irgend etwas, das ein neuer Anfang war.”\textsuperscript{67} He had grown tired of the clinging of his girlfriend, Jovanka, a Yugoslav waitress eight years his senior. He takes a short-term factory job in another city during the semester break where he catches the attention of the owner as well as of the owner’s daughter, Elisabeth.

When he returns to school, he learns that Jovanka is pregnant. Ulrich asks around and finds a former medical student who performs abortions. Ulrich and Jovanka meet him and make the arrangements. Ulrich rushes off from the

\textsuperscript{66} Dieter Wellershoff, Der Sieger nimmt alles (Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1983).

\textsuperscript{67} Wellershoff 13; “that something happened, an event that became meaningful for him and changed his life, anything that was a new beginning.”
meeting to see Elisabeth who is passing through town on vacation. On a sudden whim, he asks Elisabeth to marry him just as she is about to board the train.

The next day, the abortion is performed in Jovanka’s apartment. After Jovanka is anesthetized, Ulrich is asked to help hold the leather straps which substitute for stirrups. The abortionist tells Ulrich to put his ear to Jovanka’s stomach and he listens as the instrument scrapes the inside of her uterus. This makes him more than an accomplice in the abortion; he is an active participant. The next day, he tells Jovanka that he is leaving her. As in Walser’s novel, Ulrich’s participation follows him through the rest of his life.

Ulrich marries Elisabeth, and when she is pregnant he confesses to her about Jovanka and the abortion. “[S]ie hatte mit einem kalten Schrecken sofort gewußt, daß ihr das schaden würde: Eine andere Frau hatte sich auf sein Verlangen ein Kind auskratzen lassen, und kurz danach hatte er sie ihretwegen verlassen.” 68 Indeed, her premonition comes true: her difficult pregnancy, the premature birth of their son, and her subsequent infertility are all payback for Ulrich’s crime. “[S]ie [hatte] begriffen, daß die Tributzahlung, die sie leisten mußte noch lange nicht zu Ende war und vielleicht nie enden würde, ehe nicht etwas ähnlich Endgültiges passierte, wie es der anderen Frau geschehen war.” 69

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68 Wellershoff 106; “With a cold terror, she immediately knew that this would harm her: at his request another woman had a child scraped out, and he left that woman shortly afterward because of her.”

69 Wellershoff 106-07; “She understood that the reparations she had to make had not yet been paid in full and might never end until something similarly final had happened like what had happened to the other woman.”
The price she pays comes not only in her inability to have more than one child, who later becomes a troubled teenager. She also pays financially. Ulrich takes control of the family business bit by bit and runs it into the ground with his attempts to satisfy his desire for money and power. Just as Böll’s Hans Schnier fools himself about Marie, Ulrich is also deceived by appearances and overestimates his ability to read people. He is conned twice by businessmen who made him believe he was the manipulator when he was just playing the part they wrote for him. And Elisabeth also pays with the lives of her father and brother whose deaths result from Ulrich’s greed.

Morally and financially bankrupt and alone at the end of the novel, he has not yet given up hope. He contacts an old friend from boarding school about a job. “Man müßte sein Glück zwingen. Gerade dann, wenn alle glauben, daß man am Ende sei. In jedem Ende steckte ein neuer Anfang. [. . .] Es war lebenswichtig eine Aussicht zu haben. Jeder Mensch brauchte das. Vielleicht hatte er immer nur um eine Aussicht gekämpft.”

That night, Ulrich dies of a heart attack in his hotel room. Elisabeth, with the help of the man she dropped for Ulrich, is piecing her life and her family’s business back together.

Ulrich always failed when he was trying to force his luck. The abortion was the first in a series of attempts to do so and becomes a symbol for greed and expediency. In an effort to take advantage of what he viewed as opportunities,

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70 Wellershoff 505; “You had to force your luck. Especially when everyone believes you’re finished. In every ending there’s a new beginning. [. . .] It’s vitally important to have prospects. Everyone needs them. Maybe he had just always fought for a chance.”
people became expendable. "Gebrauchsgegenstände und Statisten in dieser Jagd [auf das Geld] sind die Frauen, die Ehefrau wie die Geliebten. Wo das Geld als Motor funktioniert, der alles in Bewegung setzt, verwandeln sich die Menschen in Kalkulationsobjekte."71 Ironically, the men who conned Ulrich treat him the way he treats women.

Sybille Cramer sees Elisabeth as "ein Bild weiblicher Subordination und Passivität, Teil der alten Gegensatzkonstruktion von weiblicher Statik und männlicher Dynamik."72 This is certainly true to an extent, namely after she has married Ulrich, when she views herself solely as Ulrich’s wife. But she manipulates him as well. It is she who initially pursues him, thinking him a much more exciting person than the man she was engaged to.

As in Walser’s Ehen in Philippsburg, abortion comes with a price in Wellershoff’s novel. Restitution must be made for the potential life lost to abortion by living people losing theirs. This time, however, revenge strikes the perpetrators slowly but directly. Jovanka is an innocent victim in this variation of what has become a familiar pattern. Since she merely acquiesced to Ulrich’s wishes, she is permitted to exit the story with her life, and we are left to imagine the emotional and physical scars she will carry with her. Ulrich pays with his life but not before a

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71 Sybille Cramer, “Erotischer Dämon oder Frau ohne Unterleib. Zum Frauenbild des Erzählers Dietter Wellershoff,” Text + Kritik 88 (1985) 50; “Instruments and extras in this pursuit [of money] are women — his wife as well as his lovers. Where money functions as the motor that sets everything in motion, people become objects of calculation.”

72 Cramer 51; “an image of female subordination and passivity, an element of the old opposition structure of female statics and male dynamics.”
torturous downward spiral. His hope that each of his actions will bring about success correlates to Jovanka’s belief that aborting to please Ulrich will bring her happiness. With each setback, the injury he inflicted on Jovanka is revisited upon him. Elisabeth is the beneficiary of the abortion in that Ulrich is freed of his entanglement with Jovanka and can marry her. She looses her father and brother in the wake of Ulrich’s disasters.

The works written in the 1980s show a shift in the portrayal of abortion. Works of previous periods exhibited a great deal of similarity with other works of the same period. Authors during the Weimar Republic used strikingly similar plot lines, and the issue of abortion became a political strategy to expose class-discriminatory laws. Early postwar authors used abortion to question the values of a society in the process of rebuilding itself. While Wellershoff’s theme of retribution can also be found in Walser’s novel and Worgitzky embeds Wolf’s play into her work, the individual circumstances presented as well as the narrative styles of works in the 1980s are vastly different from one another.

What they have in common is that they show the aftermath of abortion. Finding someone to perform the abortion is not a problem. Grass’ characters function normally in society and seem to be well adjusted. But the novel leaves the reader with the impression that something is missing. On the surface, Hein’s Claudia functions normally. Her abortions are not the cause of her inability to form emotional ties, but a symptom of a political system that has no tolerance for individuals. Wellershoff shows abortion as a man’s way of removing inconven-
iences. Worgitzky shows a woman who does not regret the choices she made. But the decision to have an abortion is not made easier by making the act itself legal. For none of these characters is living after abortion as unproblematic as getting one.

After the Wall

Divided Law in United Germany

When the crack in the wall led to the realization that unification was inevitable, one of the many differences that had to be settled was the abortion issue. West German women had learned, to live with (and how to get around) the Indikationsregelung, whereas East German women had begun to take their Fristenregelung for granted. West German women wanted and fought for the East German law and found it ironic that the East German women stood to lose something they never had to fight to obtain. Politicians could not agree on a new version, so since that was the last major issue standing in the way of reunification, they agreed to delay a resolution for two years. Reunification proceeded amid promises that a solution to the abortion question would be worked out immediately -- immediately after the elections.

Abortions by East German women increased dramatically during this time due mainly to fear of the future (Zukunftsangst): uncertainty about jobs, the economy, cuts in social services. But women also feared that if they waited to make a decision, Article 218 could go into effect in the former GDR and make the decision

\[73 \text{"Die sind" 79.}\]
for them. The fear was not unjustified, since Chancellor Helmut Kohl had started
to place abortion opponents in key positions.\textsuperscript{74}

In keeping with the Constitutional Court’s 1974 call for sufficient social
services as one way of preventing abortion, Kurt Biedenkopf (CDU) felt that the
state must bring the level of social services up to levels in the former East
Germany before punishing those women who still want abortions.\textsuperscript{75} The cost of
such an undertaking is estimated to equal or exceed the cost of reunification.
Irmgard Adam-Schwaetzer (FDP) would also like to comply with the spirit of the
Court’s decision, but was aware of the cost. “Doch mal sehen, ob wir wirklich eine
so bigotte Gesellschaft sind, daß wir diese Mittel nicht aufbringen und Frauen
lieber mit Strafe einschüchtern.”\textsuperscript{76} Chancellor Kohl, on the other hand, did not see
a problem with the status quo. In his election speeches he complained “es sei
unerträglich, daß in einem der reichsten Länder der Erde Frauen wegen einer
angeblich sozialen Notlage abtreiben ließen.”\textsuperscript{77} The implication that women abuse
the financial hardship justification has been proven untrue. Cornelia Schmalz-

\textsuperscript{74} “Vernünftige Lösung” \textit{Spiegel} 11/1991: 129. Particularly significant positions
were Minister for Women (\textit{Frauenministerin}) and the Chair of the Working Group on
Women and Children (\textit{Arbeitsgruppe Frauen und Kinder}).

\textsuperscript{75} Kurt Biedenkopf, “Frauen in Bedrängnis: Mütter und Kinder sind der Politik keine

\textsuperscript{76} Quoted in “Wirklicher Durchbruch,” \textit{Spiegel} 36/1990: 23; “Of course, that costs a
lot of money. We’ll see if we’re really such a bigoted society that we won’t come up with
the funds and would rather intimidate women with punishment.”

\textsuperscript{77} “Das zerreißt die Partei,” \textit{Spiegel} 20/1991: 27; “it is intolerable that, in one of the
richest countries of the world, women have abortions because of some alleged social
hardship.”
Jacobsen (FDP) noted, "Die nackte finanzielle Not [macht] nur einen Bruchteil aller Notlagen-Indikationen aus -- weniger als fünf Prozent. [. . .] Es ist jedoch ein Trugschluß zu glauben, mit Geld allein könnte man alle Notlagen 'in den Griff' bekommen."\(^78\) Statements like these illustrate the division of the debate into a focus on pragmatics and conservative thinking.

Fears about the low German birth rate still persist and, as we saw in Grass' book, have been accompanied by the fear that guest workers would take over the country. Statistics showed that the birth rate dropped after reunification. The reduction in the "new states," however, was less than that of the "old states."\(^79\) These statistics cannot be realistically linked with a liberalization of the abortion law, since the real number of abortions did not change appreciably. "Dennoch wird behauptet, wir hätten bald mehr Abtreibungen als Geburten."\(^80\)

A uniquely German aspect of the abortion debate dealt with the comparison of legalized abortion with Nazi policies. Cardinal Joseph Höfner of Cologne called abortion "mass murder" (Massenmord), and Bishop Johannes Dyba of Fulda spoke of a "child holocaust" (Kinder-Holocaust). As discussed in Chapter 2, the eugenic indication, a permitted justification until more than midway through the

\(^78\) Cornelia Schmalz-Jacobsen, "Wo Hilfe bloß Hürde ist," Die Zeit, 29 Jan. 1988, overseas ed.: 21; "Pure financial need makes up only a fraction of all hardship indications -- less than five percent. [. . .] It is a fallacy to think that with money alone we can 'get a handle' on all hardships."

\(^79\) "Geburtenzahl auf Rekordtief," Deutschland Nachrichten, German Information Center, 16 June, 1995.

\(^80\) Schmalz-Jacobsen 21; "Nevertheless, some maintain there will soon be more abortions than births."
pregnancy,\textsuperscript{81} was under discussion during the Weimar Republic, but was first implemented by the Nazis for the “Vernichtung menschenunwerten Lebens.”\textsuperscript{82} But there are important differences between the Nazi law and the current version:

Zweifellos war das Recht auf Leben in den Grundrechtskatalog der Verfassung vor allem deshalb aufgenommen worden, weil es in den zwölf Jahren nationalsozialistischer Herrschaft so sehr mißachtet wurde. Aber die Vernichtung menschlichen Lebens war ausnahmslos von Staats wegen organisiert.\textsuperscript{83}

Associations for the handicapped argue that this law represents discrimination in that only the perfect fetus enjoys an absolute right to life.\textsuperscript{84} The eugenic justification is a peculiar mix of the medical, financial, and the psycho-social justifications. Walter Wallmann, a CDU politician, put the case for retaining the eugenic indication eloquently:

Kein Staat ist berechtigt, von seinen Bürgerinnen und Bürgern ein heroisches Verhalten zu beanspruchen. Martyrium und Bereitschaft zur Selbstaufgabe oder grundlegenden Selbstverzichten können immer nur das bewundenswerte Ergebnis ganz persönlicher, freier

\textsuperscript{81} The reason for the longer period for this indication in the current law is that most tests that detect congenital or hereditary diseases can only be performed after the 12-week limit has expired, and the results are not available until very close to the 22-week legal limit for medical and eugenic abortions.

\textsuperscript{82} Quoted in Maron 92; “destruction of life unworthy of living.”

\textsuperscript{83} Hans Schueler, “Einig im Unsinn. Der Paragraph 218 ist zu ändern,” \textit{Die Zeit} 10 August 1990 overseas ed.; “The right to life was undoubtedly included among the basic rights of the constitution primarily because it was so blatantly ignored during the 12 years of National Socialist rule. However, the destruction of human life was organized exclusively as a matter of official policy.”

Postunification Literary Abortions

With the abortion controversy receiving so much media attention it is somewhat surprising that few writers have commented on the issue either in public or in literary form. In contrast to the trend prior to unification, however, it is women authors who are exploring the topic and men who have remained largely silent. It is less surprising that the complex of issues surrounding crisis pregnancies -- illegitimacy, abortion, single motherhood -- has once again taken its place as the central focus of fiction as it did in the late 18th century and during the Weimar Republic rather than as a side-issue as in previous postwar works.

Karin Struck's novel Die Mutter (1975) deals with abortion only marginally, but sets the stage for Blaubarts Schatten (1991). In Die Mutter, Struck's main character, Nora, is on a quest to understand her mother in order to understand herself. The novel begins, "Nora will ihre Mutter suchen und erschaffen, ehe sie

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85 Walter Wallmann, "Für die Fristenlösung," Spiegel 38/1991: 27; "No state is entitled to require heroic behavior of its citizens. Martyrdom and the willingness for personal sacrifice or fundamental personal self-denial can only be the result of totally personal, free decisions, and can never made the norm or moral commandment by virtue of law."

86 Karin Struck, Die Mutter (Frankfurt/M: Suhrkamp, 1975).

stirbt oder ehe sie Selbstmord begeht." Struck thus establishes the novel as an existential pursuit.

The quest is not just fictional; several critics have noted that the main character as well as the narrator can be identified with Struck. The main character, Nora, and the narrator cannot easily be distinguished from each other, and the transitions follow without notice or demarcations. The novel alternates between first and third person, direct and indirect quotes as well as between the life stories of different characters. By mixing the narratives in such a way as to blur the transition from one character to another, Struck underscores the universality of the women's experiences.

Nora, like Struck, is an author, married, and the mother of two children. During the course of the novel, Nora (like Struck) gives birth to her second child. Nora and her mother have not gotten along, which Nora traces back to feelings of being unwanted. Her mother wanted her first born to be a boy, and the disappointment her mother felt left psychological scars on Nora. When Nora wishes she had never been born ("Nicht geboren zu sein ist das höchste Glück"), she expresses not a desire for death, but a longing for that condition of plenitude her

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88 Struck, Mutter 7; "Nora wants to search for and create her mother before she dies or before she commits suicide."


90 Struck, Mutter 385; "Not to have been born is the greatest joy."
mother did not provide. Object-relations theorists define plenitude as follows:

"The infant's original state is one of fusion with the mother who satisfies its needs for warmth, food, and protection. In this period of extreme dependence the infant does not distinguish itself from the external world, which is coextensive with the mother."\textsuperscript{91} Her gender, Nora feels, caused her to be deprived of plenitude because the female is not valued by society. Her wish to reverse her birth is a desire to begin again in an altered society in which women are accorded their proper worth.

She traces these feelings in herself back through her mother, who was also "supposed" to be a boy. As farmers, Nora's grandparents wanted boys as laborers. Boys enrich the wealth of the family, whereas girls could only relieve the mother of some housework. Nora's mother was to be the last chance for her parents to have a boy, but their hopes for a male heir were dashed again. Struck argues that rejection of females is anchored in the social structure and is thus passed from mother to daughter.

Struck's arguments also follow along the lines of psychoanalytic theories of mothering in which "[a]n emphasis on the infant's needs, assumed to be unproblematic, calls forth a description of a mother 'good enough' to address these needs."\textsuperscript{92} Struck assumes that infants need, deserve, even have a right to a single

\textsuperscript{91} Janice Doane and Devon Hodges, From Klein to Kristeva. Psychoanalytic Feminism and the Search for the 'Good Enough' Mother (Ann Arbor: U Michigan P, 1992) 41. Doane and Hodges quote Sharon O'Brien's summary of Nancy Chodorow's Reproduction of Mothering.

\textsuperscript{92} Doane and Hodges 2.
primary care-giver, a role that she feels can only be filled by a mother. This is an assumption encouraged by the influential psychoanalyst D. W. Winnicott, whose description of the 'environment mother' "empowers the mother by acknowledging her subjectivity and her work as nurturer. Yet, while creating mothers as agents, Winnicott simultaneously creates them as objects for the regulatory discourse of experts."\(^{93}\) His work assumes that problems with the child are the result of poor mothering. In Struck's effort to support women's reproductive and care-giving work, she relegates women to the role of mother and dismisses women who choose not to mother. On the other hand, she acknowledges the problems with this stance when she asks, "Ist denn eine Mutter immer eine Frau, die sich selber aufopfern muß? Mutterliebe als Aufopferung einer Identität, das wäre wirklich pervers."\(^{94}\) However, she offers no possibility of womanhood without motherhood. This attitude reinforced women's frustrations at a time when feminists strove to expand women's jurisdiction to areas outside the home.

Nora feels conflicts within herself when she notes her own resentment of her children for the demands they place on her energy and time and for the intellectual drain she experiences. She views mothering as an art for which one must posses talent and inner peace. However, she discovers that the undervaluing of the art of mothering, like the undervaluing of females, is a self-perpetuating process. She argues that until mothering is taught and held as truly important to

\(^{93}\) Doan and Hodges 21.

\(^{94}\) Struck, Mutter 51; "Is a mother always a woman who has to sacrifice herself? Mother love as the sacrifice of an identity; that would be really perverse."
society, the circle will never be broken. "Das Muttersein werde von der allein auf
das Männliche konzentrierten Gesellschaft so gering geschätzt, daß man es jedem
Menschen zutraue ohne Lehrzeit."\(^{95}\) Here we can see her call for a
professionalization of childrearing, which utilizes feminist reinterpretations of
Marxist categories.\(^{96}\) "Heinrich sagt ironisch: du schaffst keinen Mehrwert, du
schaffst nur Menschen, keinen Wert und keinen Mehrwert."\(^{97}\)

Abortion in this novel is indicative of the low regard in which society holds
women. "[Ich] trauere, daß Frauen abtreiben müssen, weil sie oft nur noch so ihre
Freiheit behaupten können, das kleine Stück von Freiheit, was noch bleibt, wenn
man seinen eignen Körper verleugnet. So bleibt ja nichts, als auf die Suche nach
dem eigenen Wert zu gehen."\(^{98}\) Since her main concern in this book is to raise the
status of mothers and mothering, abortion would have to be considered as a
negative by definition -- the prevention of a birth is the denial of the fulfillment of
the maternal. Motherhood is the only value women possess, even if society does

\(^{95}\) Struck, *Mutter* 83; "Motherhood is held in such low esteem by a society
concentrated solely on the masculine that we entrust it to just anyone without providing
training."

\(^{96}\) Seyla Benhabib and Drucilla Cornell, Introduction, "Beyond the Politics of
Gender," *Feminism as Critique* (Minneapolis: U Minnesota P, 1987) 2. In the same
volume, see also Linda Nicholson, "Feminism and Marx. Integrating Kinship with the

\(^{97}\) Struck, *Mutter* 163; "Heinrich said ironically, you don't create added value, you
only create people, no value and no added value."

\(^{98}\) Struck, *Mutter* 23; "[I] mourn that women have to have abortions because this is
often the only way they can assert their freedom, that small bit of freedom that remains
when a woman acts contrary to her own body. The only thing left is to search for her own
worth."
not recognize it, especially when compared with the prospect of searching for self-worth outside of motherhood. When pregnancy, birth, and child-rearing are already not considered as socially or economically productive activities, abortion represents a false sense of freedom. "Und jetzt glauben die Menschen sich zu befreien, wenn sie sich von der Fortpflanzungslust loslösen, und sie begreifen nicht, daß eine vollkommene Naturloslösung eine vollkommene Leere und Langeweile nach sich zieht."99

In Die Mutter, most of Struck's comments are little more than sound bites strewn around the work like gems of wisdom. For this reason, her comments on abortion and other issues remain unclear and undefined. She calls abortion hostile to life (lebensfeindlich) on various occasions. In addition to abortion, she opposes anesthesia during birth, births in hospitals, mothers working outside the home. Likewise unexplained is her opposition to birth control: "ein widerliches Wort."100 Like Grass, she dismisses global over-population as irrelevant to German population considerations. She brings up many intersecting topics, to which she offers, and to which there are no easy solutions. By presenting anecdotes that support one side of the argument or the other, she illustrates the complexity of the issues while at the same time she feels helpless to improve conditions. And as she is a product of these same conditions, she is powerless to change herself and

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99 Struck, Mutter 105; "And now people think they are emancipating themselves when they detach themselves from the desire to procreate and they do not understand that a complete detachment from nature results in complete emptiness and boredom."

100 Struck, Mutter 147; "a disgusting word."
is doomed to repeat mistakes in the next generation. "Aber was ist der Ausweg?" ("But what is the solution?") she asks several times. From the patchwork of anecdotes, wisdoms, etc., her answer seems to be that society must learn to value children and the people who raise them and then be restructured to reflect these new priorities. How society is supposed to accomplish this task remains unclear.

In Blaubarts Schatten (1991), many of the same themes recur, but in this work, Struck's main target is not society's disregard for mothers, but the destructive impact abortion has on women's lives, as demonstrated in the life of Lily, who again shows striking similarities to Struck. The main character in this novel is an author. Like Struck, Lily had two children by a first marriage, but is now divorced and has a third, illegitimate child (Struck has a total of five children). And like Struck, she has also had an abortion.

Although Lily went to Pro Familia\textsuperscript{101} as well as to a Protestant minister for counseling, she later maintains that she was brainwashed into having the abortion. Lily disputes feminists' claims that no woman frivolously decides to abort by claiming she did. She claims not to have known enough biology to have made an informed decision. "Niemand sagte mir die Wahrheit, niemand gab mir Bücher des Genetikers Jérôme Lejeune zu lesen [. . .]."\textsuperscript{102} She professes diminished responsibility for her actions and believes someone should have tried to talk her out of it. Had anyone asked, she says, she would have backed out. Some of

\textsuperscript{101} This organization is roughly equivalent to Planned Parenthood in the U.S.

\textsuperscript{102} Struck, Blaubart 305; "No one told me the truth, no one gave me books by the geneticist Jérôme Lejeune to read [. . .]."
these arguments are reminiscent to the child murderesses of the Storm and Stress period. However, Struck's Lily, an educated women, cannot be considered comparable with the ignorant figures of the 18th century. Her claim of diminished responsibility hardly rings true for a woman who seeks counseling from two unconnected sources.

She holds the society that has decided to refrain from punishing women (which she equates with permitting abortion) responsible for creating an atmosphere that actually encourages women to abort. It is the man, she believes, who benefits from abortion, who is freed from financial and personal responsibility of caring for a child. It is for the man's convenience that women abort. Such men are like the Bluebeard of the well-known fairy tale.

This last point is not a new one. Both Walser and Wellershoff show men who manipulate women into having abortions so that they can benefit. Ulrich in Wellershoff's novel reaps a financial benefit by being able to marry into wealth, and Walser's Hans maintains his pride and protects his social standing. All three novels hold that abortions have serious repercussions for those involved. The eye-for-an-eye vengeance in the works by Wellershoff and Walser have already been discussed. Lily blames the personal crisis she endured on the abortion. She traces her drinking, her promiscuity, her bad relationships, as well as her illegitimate children to a reaction against the violence done to her by the abortion. It is not until she rediscovers her anger (Wut) which for years had been suppressed (by her father's sexual abuse when she was a child) making her
unable to defend and assert herself, that she feels free from the clutches of the Bluebeards.

It is significant that the image she chooses to destroy, which enables her to express her anger, is an ironing board. By destroying a household utensil, she attempts to break out of the domestic role that the Bluebeards are trying to impose on her. Lily does not want to be a typical wife who cares for her husband and children. She has, indeed, not been a typical wife and mother. After the abortion she divorced her husband and has not been terribly good at caring for her children. While she claims to have been there to tend to their needs and send them off to school, she also concedes that she was often hung over after a night out drinking at bars while she left her children at home -- asleep, but alone. And while she has been privileged to be able to support herself with her writing, she believes that day care centers are abhorrent and that women should stay home for their children. She uses her opposition to day care centers to call for property for single women. Women who own property, whose subsistence is secure, she says, would have no reason to abort. Thus, instead of freeing herself from the ironing board, her circular argument has chained her to a house.

Both Lily and Nora believe that a woman’s place is with her children. Nora accomplishes this within a traditional marriage, but struggles to establish and maintain an identity for herself. Lily’s appeal for property for unmarried women, coupled with her rejection of marriage as oppressive calls to mind the patriarchal societies described by August Bebel and Heilwig Droste. In _Die Mutter_, Nora
called for a restructuring of society to reflect women’s worth as mothers and proposed the *große erotische Mutter* as the ideal. While Lily stops short of proposing an overthrow of capitalist patriarchy, she has established matriarchal order in the microcosm of her family. Abortion is rejected because legitimacy is not important and money is not a concern.

*Blaubarts Schatten* is the most direct position statement on abortion -- so much so that the plot is added more as an afterthought to support the arguments the novel contains. Several sections consist of long, rambling (bordering on ranting) letters to unnamed men (standing for Patriarchy), attacking them for their support of abortion rights. Other sections address female readers directly pleading with them not to abort. “Ihr jungen Frauen (und auch ihr älteren), ich flehe euch an: Gewinnt euer Gedächtnis zurück! Glaubt ihr wirklich, daß das Recht abzutreiben eure Freiheit sei?”

Although *Blaubarts Schatten* relies less on isolated phrases than *Die Mutter*, the novel form serves merely as bunting on a soapbox. Like the left-wing authors of the Weimar Republic, Lily argues by negative example: if something does not change, this is what will happen. However, she proposes herself as both the model of an emancipated woman and as abortion’s worst-case scenario.

Sibylle Knauss’ novel *Ungebetene Gäste* (1991) comes to some similar conclusions as Struck’s. Lisa is the New Woman of the 1990s. When she di-

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103 Struck, *Blaubart* 305; “You young women (and you older ones, too), I implore you: regain your memory! Do you really believe that the right to abort is your freedom?”

ured her husband, she left behind not only the house, but a way of life, her
status and her identity. Her 13-year-old son lives with her, and she is able to
support the two of them by working in the arts section of a newspaper, formerly a
free-lance hobby, now her full-time career. She begins a week-end affair with a
married man she met on a train; his wife and three children live in the country and
he commutes home several times a month. Everything seems to be functioning
well until she becomes pregnant.

Knauss is one of the few authors who addresses birth control. Lisa had just
had an intrauterine device removed and was waiting for an appointment to have a
new one inserted. Her IUD had allowed her to ignore birth control to a great
degree; she did not have the daily reminder of taking a pill or the routine of
remembering to use a condom or a diaphragm. She forgot only one time. This
kind of mistake for an informed, conscientious postwar woman is analogous to the
women in Storm and Stress who became pregnant from their first and only sexual
encounter. It demonstrates both how much attitudes about sex have evolved as
well as how little control women still have over contraception.

Her first thought, once she was certain that she was pregnant, was to have
an abortion. “Es war das mindeste, was man von Lisa erwarten konnte: nicht
schwanger zu sein. Selbst die Politiker in Bonn zählten darauf, die Sprecher von
Ministerien und Verbänden rechneten fest damit, daß man sich auf Lisa verlassen

konnte, und teilten ihr das über die Medien mit. She was, after all, 40, unmarried, employed outside the home. She goes on mechanically making the logistical plans and taking the bureaucratic steps for her termination, until she has a dream about the baby and chooses names.

The title of the novel prepares the way for this event. The phrase “uninvited guest” often connotes someone who is unwelcome, and that is Lisa’s initial reaction. The term “guest,” as opposed to “child” or “baby,” also creates distance between Lisa and the fetus: a guest’s stay is temporary. However, not all guests are unwelcome and this guest’s temporary abode is inside Lisa; it must come out one way or another, either by birth or by abortion. The use of apostrophe, giving it a name, transforms the guest from an inanimate mass of cells into a living baby. “The absent, dead, or inanimate entity addressed is thereby made present, animate, and anthropomorphic. Apostrophe is a form of ventriloquism through which the speaker throws voice, life, and human form into the addressee, turning its silence into mute responsiveness.” After naming the baby, she finds she can no longer abort it.

Like the characters in the novels by Vicki Baum and Irmgard Keun, Knauss’ Lisa decides to raise an illegitimate child on her own. While her friends do offer to pitch in if she needs help, she meets with little understanding from friends and co-

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105 Knauss 125; “It was the least that could be expected of Lisa: not to be pregnant. Even the politicians in Bonn counted on it, the spokespeople of ministries and associations were positive that they could rely on Lisa and informed her of it through the media.”

106 Johnson 30.
workers and she notes how differently they treat her as soon as she starts showing. Julius, the baby's father, is pleased at the thought of becoming a father again, but finds himself caught in the middle of two families. He offers to divorce his wife to marry her, but Lisa turns him down. She is determined to raise this child on her own despite the difficulties.

Interwoven into Lisa's narrative is a comparison story from the Weimar and Nazi eras that strengthens the novel's statement against abortion. A young woman is traveling by train to another city to have her illegitimate baby in secrecy. Labor has started and her water breaks while she is changing trains. Instead of waiting for the train to her destination, she boards the very next train that comes into the station and locks herself into the bathroom. Several hours later a linesman finds a newborn baby boy along the tracks.

A childless railway official and his wife adopt the boy; he is a good-natured child, but he suffered brain and spinal damage during the fall, which only shows up later. The wife does not take to motherhood, particularly for a child who requires special attention. On the advice of a doctor and to avoid the appearance of "genetic irregularities" that might jeopardize her husband's position under the new regime, she talks her husband, who loves the boy dearly, into placing Alfred into a home in 1935. The nuns at the home save Alfred from being taken during a Nazi round-up by keeping him in bed, claiming that he had been gravely ill. After the war, when he is 21, he is returned to his adoptive parents, where he and his now retired father play all day with model trains. After the death of his parents, Alfred
spends days at a time riding the train, giving people information from the
schedule he has memorized, helping little old ladies and lost children.

Alfred touches Lisa's life twice. He is on the train when Lisa and Julius
meet. As Alfred talks to his friends who work in the dining car, Lisa is intrigued by
him. Julius happens to be in the dining car as well and notices Lisa. He begins a
conversation with her by commenting on the curious relationship Alfred appears to
have with the train personnel. Without Alfred, Lisa and Julius may never have
met. Alfred also takes care of Lisa's 13 year old son, Moritz, who has run away
from home. Alfred notices that Moritz is traveling alone and instinctively stops and
accompanies him back home. Lisa never learns about Moritz running away,
because she has gone into labor and left for the hospital.

By making the causal link between an unwanted child and a new life,
Knauss transforms the direction of the novel from a personal decision into a po-
litical statement. Alfred is saved at birth by the Weimar Republic's version of Ar-
ticle 218 that prohibited abortion. His mother's intention of bearing the child in
secrecy was the only alternative to an illegal abortion that would preserve her own
and her family's reputation -- at least in her home town, to which she planned to
return. It remains unclear whether Alfred was intentionally thrown down the toilet:
"Vielleicht hatte sie auch einer Eingebung gehorcht, die mit der schauerlichen
Doppeldeutigkeit der Bezeichnung Abort zu tun hat, als sie in einem Augenblick
ihrer Qual, Verwirrung und Verlassenheit nicht achtgab und ihr Kind verlor, wie sie
es von Anfang an heimlich gehofft hatte.”

By leaving him for dead, she commits moral infanticide. Chance let Alfred be saved from this fate by the linesman who found him before he would have died on the tracks. He is saved again by the nun at the home who covered up his disabilities from the Nazi soldiers. It is understood that they were searching for children considered unfit for life (*lebensuntauglich*), who were taken to concentration camps and murdered.

Lisa makes her initial decision to have an abortion emphatically, but without guilt or self-reproach. “Ohne mich, sagte sie. Ist das klar? Ohne mich!”

But she also makes it mechanically, as a reflex. Her hectic holiday schedule (shortly before Christmas) made it difficult for her to fulfill the required counseling session for a legal abortion. It is during the obligatory waiting period that she decides to keep the baby. Keeping the baby thus reinforces the justification for Alfred’s existence. It emphasizes the belief in the importance of all life and confirms the efforts made by others to save Alfred’s. While the novel expresses no direct criticism of the *Indikationslösung*, she condemns it by showing the impact one life has on so many others.

This novel also shows how external forces drive the decision-making process. It is clear from the passage cited above that the decision to abort stems not from Lisa, but rather from media and societal forces. On a rational level, she

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107 Knauss 110; “Maybe she followed an inspiration that had to do with the gruesome double meaning of the term abort [abortion and toilet] when in a moment of torture, confusion and abandonment she lost her concentration as well as her child, like she had secretly hoped from the very beginning.”

108 Knauss 87; “Not with me, she said. Is that clear? Not with me!”
conforms to societal expectations to have an abortion while at the same time having to negotiate the bureaucratic barriers society erected to prevent her from doing just that. It is less obvious that her decision not to abort has also been shaped by external forces. Her change of heart is apparently motivated by an internal force on an emotional level. Her maternal protective instinct is triggered by choosing a name. However, by linking the subject of Nazi population policy to Lisa's story through the figure of Alfred, the indirect historical forces influencing Lisa's decision are revealed. Knauss is the only author to confront the dilemma created by Nazi atrocities in the context of the abortion debate so directly. It remains an undercurrent in the novel as it does in the public debate as well.

The Postwar Abortion Experience

Unlike previous literary periods, there is no "typical" woman seeking an abortion in works written after 1945 -- and no corresponding cultural icon like Gretchen or the New Woman. The familiar categories do not apply. The postwar woman is older and has more sexual experience. She is neither a member of the working class nor the guardian of middle-class family values. She does not seek an abortion primarily due to financial circumstances or fear of losing her job. Most of the women are single (including one widow and one divorced woman), although marital status, in particular the inability to marry and legitimize the child, generally has little to do with the motivation to have an abortion. Their motivations stem from their individual circumstances.
We saw in Chapter 2 how the government's population policy was connected to and conflicted with individual decisions concerning family planning. While the desire to plan and space children is certainly not new, it has become more prevalent and more important as women's role in society has evolved. Women working outside the home has become the norm rather than the exception over the last 50 years. This fact and the problems associated with combining child-rearing and career are addressed with increasing frequency in the more recent works.

The women we saw in the works of the 1920s and 1930s generally gave up their careers when they married. Early postwar women are also rarely portrayed as working mothers. The few young children of working mothers we do see, such as Lämmchen’s and Pinneberg’s baby in Hans Fallada’s *Kleiner Mann -- was nun?* and Carla’s son in Wolfgang Koeppen’s *Tauben im Gras* are sometimes left unsupervised at a very young age. Not until the 1980s and 1990s are working women depicted who choose a career for personal fulfillment rather than financial need. Considerations of timing, career goals, and family relationships affect working women in a way that even the most liberal maternity leave policy or the most "modern" husband cannot change.

This conflict is demonstrated poignantly in Worgitzky's *Meine ungeborenen Kinder* by the example of Emilia, a young actress who is tapped to play Recha in *Nathan der Weise*. Having had success in Berlin in her first role after graduating from acting school as Hete in *Cyankali*, the actress has to decide between a
career-advancing opportunity to play the important role and taking maternity
leave to have a baby. Emilia and her boyfriend, Heinz, were both very happy at
the prospect of having a child. Heinz tells Martha, who has been a mentor of sorts
to Emilia, that he would prefer to keep the baby, but is aware that Emilia’s career is
on the line and that she may not get another opportunity for such an important role
if she turns this one down. Martha discusses the advantages and disadvantages
with them and compares Emilia’s situation to her own.

Als ich mich entschloß, ein Kind zu bekommen, war ich schon ein
paar Jahre am Theater. Für mich stand nichts auf dem Spiel, zumal
ich nicht auf dem Präsentierteller Berlin saß. Aber wenn ich die
Kolleginnen sehe, die das Kinderkriegen so lange hinausgeschoben
haben, bis es zu spät war, möchte ich sagen: Der richtige Zeitpunkt
ist es in unserem Beruf nie.\textsuperscript{109}

This observation is a common complaint for women in other occupations as
well, and women in several of the other novels have similar conflicts. Dörte’s
conflicts in Grass’ \textit{Kopfgeburten} were discussed previously, but Knauss’ Lisa and
Hein’s Claudia also include job and school conflicts, respectively, in their
deliberations, whether or not they go through with the abortion. The GDR of Hein’s
\textit{Drachenblut} and Worgitzky’s \textit{Meine ungeborenen Kinder} as well as the reunified
Germany of Knauss’ \textit{Ungebete G"aste} guarantee(d) job security for new
mothers. Fear of losing one’s job, as we saw with typists and domestic servants,
has been replaced by concern over the type of work. Fear of the “mommy track,”

\textsuperscript{109} Worgitzky 284-85; “When I decided to have a child, I had already been working
in theater a few years. There was nothing at stake for me, since I wasn’t sitting on the
silver platter of Berlin. But when I see the colleagues who postponed having children for
so long that it was too late, I’d have to say that in our field it’s never the right time.”
with its slow promotions and less important assignments, is a real one for women who take their careers seriously.¹¹⁰

As we saw in Chapter 2, the low German birth rate and coercive measures to stimulate births were grounds for protest in works of the Weimar Republic. While the birth rate in Germany remains low, a number of characters cite global overpopulation as a consideration when thinking about having children, or rather as a reason not to have children. In general, they mean overpopulation in third world countries, not in Europe, and several specifically mention China. Today, birth control is a given in most industrialized countries and a way of life for most people (mostly women). The question in this context is whether individual decisions can influence world population policy.

The best discussion of this question comes from Grass in Kopfgeburten when he turns it on its head, so to speak, with his mind game of switching Germany’s and China’s populations. China is chosen as an example of out-of-control population explosion and of extreme population policy measures. In this case, Dörte’s and Harm’s decisions might have relevance. Their decision to postpone having children, or more precisely, their indecision that leads to them not having children, might even be considered valorous within the Chinese context, as a renunciation of personal goals for the good of the whole. With 950 million Germans roaming the earth, the entire world would be interested in their choice but would not pay much attention to whether a couple in a small country with a low

birth rate had a child or not. Clearly, Grass rejects such concerns for Germany’s real situation.

One theme that occurs in many of the postwar novels and that is tied to the causes for abortion is lack of communication. Ilse-Marie Gates describes the many techniques Hein employs in Drachenblut to show that it is impossible for his characters to communicate with each other. For Hein’s main character, Claudia, politics is responsible for breaking off the relationships to the two people with whom true communication was possible, her friend Katharina and her uncle Gerhard. As a result of these early experiences, she became completely isolated from other people. Not even with her husband, Hinner, was Claudia able to sustain meaningful communication. The second abortion, at least, is a symptom of this inability. Claudia did not even tell Hinner that she was pregnant until after the abortion was over. Since the callousness of politics is responsible for Claudia’s inability to form relationships, politics is responsible for her abortion.

Other novels show various difficulties with communication. Böll’s one-way flow of information has already been discussed. The novels by Koeppen, Schallück, Böll, and Wellershoff all contain characters who withhold information. Koeppen’s novel contains little dialogue; the reader learns more about what the characters think than what they say to each other. That Carla arranges for an abortion without Washington’s knowledge and that he prevents it without hers is

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mitigated by their apparent mutual decision to start a new life in France. Schallück's and Wellershoff's novels show the disastrous results of dishonesty in relationships.

Dörte and Harm in Grass' *Kopfgeburten*, on the other hand, seem to have little difficulty speaking to each other. When they discuss having children, however, they talk in circles and cannot come to a decision. They can express their feelings, but they cannot use language productively to solve problems. They stop the discussion before the issue is resolved, promising again and again to revisit the topic.

Hans in Walser's *Ehen in Philippsburg* initially experiences tremendous difficulties in conversation, particularly with women. His problems cover two extremes. He must consciously try and strategically plan to contribute to a conversation early or run the risk of being left out completely, unable to find a suitable opening. However, after a few drinks, the opposite problem emerges: he has difficulty stopping himself and controlling what comes out of his mouth. His problem is particularly ironic considering his field is journalism in which his job is to impart information.

The relationship between Hans and Anne results from a strange mix of conversation and silence. Hans is attracted to a secretary he met trying to get an interview at a newspaper. However, he stumbles through the conversation and she loses interest in him. Anne is attracted to Hans because he listens to her, but he does so only because he can think of nothing to say. At the party given in his
honor, Hans is impressed and sexually aroused by the way Benrath speaks. Hans and Anne have sex later that night without exchanging a single word. As we have already seen, Hans learns to overcome his difficulties. His verbal maneuvering convinces Anne that an abortion is in her best interest.

Position Statements as Novels

Most of these novels avoid taking issue with the law, focusing instead on the relationships and the circumstances surrounding the decision. Two of the novels stand out for their strong and overt stances on abortion. Indeed, Worgitzky’s *Meine ungeborenen Kinder* and Struck’s *Blaubarts Schatten* can be read more as position statements than novels. Large sections of both novels address the reader either directly or indirectly (by means of a fictive addressee or listener) in the form of first person narrative. These sections also take the form of a confession, much like life stories contained in the collections by Alice Schwarzer\(^{112}\) and Maxie Wander.

While the title of Struck’s novel gives the reader no indication of its subject matter or that it is written in support of the pro-life movement, Worgitzky’s title employs pro-life terminology for a novel that is decidedly pro-choice. Whereas pro-choice advocates tend to use the terms “embryo” or “fetus,” depending on the stage of development, pro-life supporters use “unborn child” to underscore their image of a living being protected by constitutional rights. “Where abortion is not simply a sentimental climax but a part of the choice raised by contemplating the

\(^{112}\) Alice Schwarzer *Frauen gegen den §218. 18 Protokolle, aufgezeichnet von Alice Schwarzer* (Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp, 1971).
whole vexed process of human sexuality and maternity, contemporary writers are as conflicted as feminism itself, no less so after choice is legal than when it was an outlaw choice." \(^{113}\) The narrative attempts to explain Martha's choices and Wolf's intertextual play puts these choices into historical context, but the title reminds us that none of these decisions were easy.

Both Worgtzyk and Struck portray women in their forties with active sex lives who have borne children as well as had abortions. The two characters have, in fact, both been pregnant numerous times, and neither appears to have used birth control consistently. Their lack of caution may appear negligent to us in the 1990s, but we must consider when the characters lived. Martha's pregnancies in *Meine ungeborenen Kinder* occurred during the 1960s and early 1970s, Lily's in *Blaubarts Schatten* in the 1970s. While birth control was hardly new (Martha mentions using vinegar and water douches, a traditional method that can actually have the opposite effect), newer, medical methods were not widely accepted. Worgtzyk's Martha does not mention using birth control at all until after her fifth abortion in the late 1960s or early 1970s. At this time she tried different versions of the pill, but experienced side effects. She then had an intrauterine device inserted, but became pregnant in spite of it, which resulted in her sixth abortion. \(^{114}\)

\(^{113}\) Wilt 32.

\(^{114}\) While Worgtzyk portrays this abortion as an elective procedure, it would most likely have been deemed medically necessary due to interference from the IUD as the fetus became larger. Furthermore, it is unlikely that the pregnancy was normal or the abortion routine. IUDs are quite reliable in protecting against normal pregnancies but ineffective against ectopic pregnancies in the fallopian tubes. Ectopic pregnancies endanger the life and continued reproductive capacity of the mother.
Struck's Lily had the same methods of birth control available to her in the 1970s. She associates condom use with prostitutes and in several passages expresses an opposition to birth control in general. Sexuality is portrayed by both authors to be a normal, integral and pleasurable part of their characters' lives. Indeed, this has been true for most of the women portrayed in the 20th century. However, sex is no longer linked to even the promise of marriage, and marriage is not a prerequisite for children. The main outward difference between the characters lies in the number of abortions to births. Martha had one child and six abortions, Lily had four children (two illegitimate) and one abortion.

These novels also set themselves apart from most of the others written after 1945 in that there is a time difference between the abortion itself and the narrative present. The reason these characters are telling their stories is because they want the reader to understand their decisions. Struck's Lily begs the female readers not to have abortions. Worgitzky's Martha, on the other hand, uses the play by Friedrich Wolf, a public figure for her GDR readership, to illustrate that the consequences of criminalized abortion can be deadly. Both characters want to convince the readers to believe as they do.

Conclusions

While little about the basic plot of unplanned pregnancies is different, the role and meaning of abortion has changed considerably since the end of World War II. What began as an illegal act has gone through several legal reforms and

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\(^{115}\) This was an association common in the Weimar Republic as well.
is now technically illegal though not punishable. Its legal status has caught up with its social status as largely a matter of choice and conscience. We also see an evolution in the manner and purpose of portraying abortion in literature.

The theme of abortion was used in the immediate postwar period as a way of examining Nazi atrocities and the hypocrisy of postwar society still beset with Nazi ideals. The rise of the women's movement correlated with a shift in focus for the theme of abortion. The legalization of abortion in the East and the tacit acceptance of abortion in the West allowed authors to explore how abortion changed society and shaped women's identity by making motherhood elective rather than inevitable.

In the most recent phase, when the renewed public and political debate revolved less around whether abortion should be permitted than under what conditions, we see two women authors (Struck and Knauss) revisiting the abortion issue. Their works return to the tradition of engaging more directly in the debate and taking an open stand. Interestingly, while these works represent the opposite viewpoint of the works from the 1920s and 1930s, they are, like their historical precursors, opposed to the prevailing legal status of abortion.
CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Daily, it seems, new information comes from the news services. The Parliament passes a compromise version of Article 218 that does not prosecute women for abortions performed within the first 12 weeks, providing they undergo counseling (June 1995). The birth rate is finally up again, but is still not at replacement level (June 1997). The Constitutional Court decides that doctors are liable for damages if an unsuccessful sterilization or incorrect advice leads to parents having an unwanted child (December 1997). The Pope does not want Catholic counseling centers to issue the certificates required for abortions; four states threaten to discontinue subsidies if they stop (January 1998). Federal Family Minister suggests modifying Article 218 because abortion statistics have not declined and because 52% of abortions are performed on married women; opposition parties protest (January 1998). The World Health Organization dedicates World Health Day to safe motherhood and ending unsafe abortions (April 1998).

Little changes about the news stories, just as little about the actual circumstances surrounding unplanned, crisis pregnancies change. The stories are often tragic, particularly in light of how hard it actually is to get pregnant. Only on a few days of the month is a woman actually fertile. Approximately one fourth of all pregnancies end in spontaneous abortion -- miscarriage -- often before a
woman even suspects she is pregnant. Women and their partners who are trying to get pregnant are all too aware of these cold biological facts. Women trying to avoid pregnancy seem somehow exempted from these laws of nature.

The character types established in the late 18th century have provided later authors with ample material. The fallen woman has served all literary periods well. Even after 1945, she appears in Martin Walser's and Dieter Wellershoff's novels as the woman oppressed by men and in Karin Struck's novel as the woman oppressed by both men and society. The cad has also been a staple of infanticide and abortion plots. The worst of them were the Graf in Heinrich von Kleist's *Die Marquise von O...* and Ulrich in Wellershoff's *Der Sieger nimmt alles*. The parents made a strong showing in the 19th century with its conservative society and its focus on family values. The blustering father reared his head in Hebbel's *Maria Magdalene* when his threats to commit suicide should Klara bring shame on his house lead her to kill herself and the baby. By the 20th century, however, the father had had virtually disappeared from literary works. The woman's relationship with her mother has always been a problematic one. The mother was rarely an understanding figure, and was sometimes portrayed as trying to advance her own social standing through her daughter. During the Weimar Republic, when young women were forging a new identity for themselves that was radically different from that of their mothers' generation, they felt unable to turn to their mothers for help. In the novels written after 1945, the women are generally have a distant or strained relationship their mothers.
Abortion replaced infanticide in works of the Weimar Republic, but the strategy used by 18th century authors of gaining sympathy for their female characters was also used in the 1920s and 1930s. Both groups of authors exposed injustices toward the lower classes and abuses by the upper classes. Both groups also portrayed stereotyped female characters that were controversial for their time. While the public discourse surrounding the child murderess in the 18th century led to milder sentences, the debate in the 1920s and 1930s became highly polarized and was followed by a National Socialist backlash that enforced restrictive and selective population policy measures.

The works written after 1945 broke with the 18th century standard in several ways. The women portrayed are no longer stereotyped images; indeed, several of the works concentrate on the role men play in abortion. Abortion is generally not the central theme of the novels. In the immediate postwar period, abortion is used to explore wartime experiences and postwar hypocrisy. Works written after the reemergence of the women's movement and liberalization of abortion laws look at the long-term effects of abortion on both men and women. Two novels by women written after reunification, when the unified version of the law was still being debated, return to a more direct political message and examine how choice affects women’s lives.

Durs Grünbein revisits the theme of infanticide and child abandonment (*Kindesaussetzung*). The images in this poem are taken from modern culture and its subject comes from current events. We are reminded of the character of
Alfred in Sibylle Knauss' *Ungebetene Gäste* as well as of the desperate women depicted in some of the works discussed in this dissertation. The mother of the child in this poem remains anonymous.

*Verzagt.* -- Im Schließfach eines Fernbahnhofs in Rom
Fand sich die Leiche eines neugeborenen Kindes,
Kaum eine Woche alt. Die Nabelwunde war noch frisch.

Noch war der Name auf der Haut nicht angetrocknet,
Kaum sichtbar das Geschlecht, da lag das Bündel
Schon festverschnürt bereit zur Reise

In einen andern Automaten-Limbo, in ein andres Licht.¹

APPENDIX
WEIMAR REPUBLIC PLOT SUMMARIES

Arnau, Frank. Gesetz, das tötet (1930). The story of three abortions in the same house.
1. Lu Dominique-Vanderstraaten, wife of the banker and Commerce Councilor Dominique. They have a “business marriage”: he married her in order to obtain capital for his bank. She is in town only between trips to ski lodges, spas, etc. She gets pregnant by a lover and returns to Berlin to check into a discreet clinic for an abortion. Lutz Fink, the former chauffeur, reports them to the police, but no charges are brought ostensibly due to lack of evidence, however no questions are asked about how she could be pregnant if she was out of town.
2. Juscha Lehner, a secretary in a law office, lives with her widowed mother in Commerce Councilor Dominique’s house (they use the back entrance). Her father was a low-level civil servant. She has an affair with Dominique, who cares for her but cannot divorce his wife lest he relinquish her money. Juscha becomes pregnant, but the tawdriness of the affair disturbs her and she breaks up with Dominique without telling him of the pregnancy. She begins dating the boss’s son, Leo Jakobsohn, who wants to marry her. She confides in him and he sends her to a friend who is an insurance physician in the poor district. Dr. Berolsheimer performs the abortion because he fears she will commit suicide. She recovers slowly, catches a cold on top of it and dies. Berolsheimer is arrested; Leo defends him, but Berolsheimer is convicted of performing an abortion for profit and of manslaughter and is sentenced to a work house.
3. Else Merten’s father is Dominique’s gardener; her mother is dead. They live in the gardener’s cottage, and she keeps house for her father. She has a relationship with Lutz Fink, Dominique’s chauffeur. They cannot marry because Dominique does not want a married chauffeur. Else’s father goes to Dominique about Fink’s advances toward his daughter. Fink is warned and then fired when they are discovered again. Else is pregnant, and Fink finds Frau Mühlmann, a midwife to perform an abortion. Else steals the money from her father while he is drunk. The abortion appears to have gone well, but she loses too much blood and almost dies. Her father finds her and calls a neighboring doctor, who gets her to the hospital and reports the abortion to the police. At the hospital she is questioned by the investigators. She confesses and implicates Fink and Mühlmann. All three are convicted. After her sentence is served, her father takes her in.

Baum, Vicki. Stud. chem. Helene Willfüer (1928). Helene, a poor orphan studying chemistry, becomes pregnant by her boyfriend, Rainer. She seeks an abortion first from a medical school drop-out, who makes sexual advances toward her. Then she goes to a clinic in Frankfurt where they are willing to perform an operation “to correct the problem with her menstrual cycle,” but the fees are too high. She then goes to a midwife and makes arrangements for an abortion. While she is retrieving her suitcase from the train station, the screams of another
girl at the midwife's house cause neighbors to summon the police. She returns
during the raid and is advised by one of the officers not to go in. She and
Rainer, who is depressed about his domineering family, decide to commit suicide
together. Helene backs out, but her boyfriend goes through with it. She keeps
the child, finishes her degree, finds a job and muddles through with no support
system. Later she runs into her former professor, to whom she felt a particular
attachment, and marries him.

Braune, Rudolf. Das Mädchen an der Orge Privat (1932). The story of the po-
itical awakening of Erna Halbe, who moved to Berlin from a small village to take
a job in an office steno pool. Not yet 19 years old, she worked in a factory be-
fore learning typing and stenography and has already worked in a lawyer's office
in the village for four years. One of the typists, Trude Leußner, is pregnant by
one of the two bosses. She has tried various unspecified methods of self-in-
duced abortion and is fired ostensibly because of lack of work. Erna also runs
from doctor to doctor and found one (a female doctor) who would refer Trude to
someone who would perform an abortion, but it is too late. Trude collapses and
is taken to the hospital. Inspired by her boyfriend's talk of unions, Erna organ-
izes a sit-in to protest Trude's termination and to demand union wages. After
they learn of Trude's death, Erna accepts dismissal with a letter of recommenda-
tion to prevent the entire steno pool from being fired as well. Erna is evicted
from her furnished room because her landlady caught Erna's boyfriend, Fritz
Dreikopf, spending the night. Fritz was also dismissed from his job an auto
mechanic for punching his boss who ordered him to make unnecessary repairs.
He is then arrested for stealing the back wages his boss refused to pay. The
story ends with Erna sharing a room with some of her former co-workers, one of
whom is wanted by the police for kidnapping her daughter from her ex-husband.
She has no job, but she has hope for the future because of the self-assurance
she gained with her political insights.

Bredel, Willi. Die Rosenhofstraße (1931). Else Langfeld, a laid-off seamstress,
joins the KPD because her boyfriend, Fritz Burmester, is a member. Sales clerk
Trudel Merker, a flighty flapper type, is pregnant and goes to Else for help. Else
asks her party friends for the name of a midwife who will perform an abortion.
Afterward, Trudel resumes her carefree ways and does not want to be reminded
of her previous tribulations. Bakery gossip gets her into trouble -- the word gets
to the police who entrap Trudel into confessing and implicating the midwife.
Luckily, she thinks quickly enough to cover for Else and Fritz. Trudel is senten-
ced to probation and then takes up with a shady character who is part of the
other strand of the story (resistance against increasing presence of the Nazis).
Else, in the meantime, is pregnant but keeps the child, even though she has no
means of supporting herself, and there is no mention of marrying Fritz, who has
been laid off and in the meantime has moved in with Else and her father.
Credé, Carl. *Gegüälte Menschen*. §218 (1930). Frau Nolte is a proletarian housewife with eight children, five or six of whom live at home in their one-room apartment. The oldest daughter, Liese, is a prostitute, another, Mieze, is a domestic with a prior conviction for abortion. Frau Nolte is pregnant again and asks Dr. Hansen, the insurance physician, for an abortion. He turns her down. Frau Nolte sends her husband to get Frau Lehmann, the local midwife to do it. Frau Lehmann makes a mistake and leaves. Dr. Hansen comes back to check on Frau Nolte and finds her bleeding to death. The neighbors summon the police and Dr. Hansen is arrested and charged with abortion for profit resulting in death. --- *Justizkrise* (*Gegüälte Menschen II*) (1930). This play portrays the trial of Dr. Hansen. A combination of circumstantial evidence, an inadequate defense, and a personal grudge by the Medical Councilor results in his conviction. His records are confiscated as well in an effort to find more women to prosecute. Nolte waits to come forward until after death of the midwife, Frau Lehmann, because he fears being implicated in procuring the abortion. But his confession and the reversal of Dr. Hansen’s conviction comes too late for Dr. Hansen, who dies on day he is supposed to be released.

Döblin, Alfred. *Die Ehe* (1930). A newly wedded man, Karl, loses his job; his company is closing the factory because the wood business is in a slump. His wife, Guste, is pregnant. She was happy about the pregnancy, but knows that they cannot afford it, particularly if she has to go back to work. She does not want to tell Karl out of fear it would send him into depression or on a drinking binge. They are forced to move in with her parents and brother, who live in a two-room apartment. She gets refusals and the run-around from doctors and social services. She buys some expensive, exotic powders from the pharmacy that are supposed to promote blood flow, which, however, do not cause a miscarriage as she was led to believe. Without telling anyone where she is going, she takes her last 10 *Mark* and goes to a midwife. Something goes wrong during the operation and she dies.

Fallada, Hans. *Kleiner Mann -- was nun?* (1932). Lämmchen, a typist gets pregnant by her boyfriend, Pinneberg. They go to a doctor for “family planning advice,” but it is too late. He will not help them, so they marry. The bulk of the story is devoted to how they manage during the economic crisis. Pinneberg loses the one job because he was no longer available to marry the boss’ daughter. They move to Berlin and live with Pinneberg’s bohemian mother for a time before finding a small apartment of their own. Pinneberg gets another job as a sales clerk which he loses for not meeting his quota and for insulting a wealthy customer. They move into an attic room which they can only access by a ladder. Pinneberg is forced to collect first unemployment then welfare benefits. They then move into a garden shed. Lämmchen takes a job in a laundry and Pinneberg is “reduced” to caring for the baby and the house.
Hotopp, Albert. *Fischkutter H. F. 13* (1930). This is the story of how the independent trades are edged out by capitalism. Lee Tews Hinrichsen, a widow, begins an affair with Harald Johannsen, who holds a lien on the boat with her house as collateral, and becomes pregnant. Her son and a long-time friend, Jan, go down in a storm. During her affair, Lee missed one insurance payment and Johannsen threatens to foreclose. Lee uses a knitting needle to abort the baby. She is found by some neighbors who call the doctor. After recovering, she is taken into custody, tried and convicted to a year in prison. After she gets out of prison, a friend of her late husband's takes her to the Soviet Union, where he says life is so much better.

Keun, Irmgard. *Gilgi, eine von uns* (1931). Gilgi is a self-assured typist. She is saving money to realize her plans for the future, which do not include marriage and children. On her 21st birthday, her parents inform her that she was adopted and that her mother was a seamstress. She finds the woman from whom her parents got her, who tells Gilgi that she was in reality the illegitimate child of a wealthy girl whose family paid the seamstress 10,000 Mark to pass the baby off as her own. The seamstress gave Gilgi to her adoptive parents whose own baby died in childbirth. Gilgi meets Martin with whom she falls hopelessly in love. His nature is diametrically opposed to hers: he squanders money, has no occupation or particular plans for the future. Little by little she loses herself in the relationship. She moves in with Martin, stops going to language classes, lies about being sick to stay home from work, becomes indecisive and procrastinates. Without a word of protest, she is selected for downsizing, not because of poor performance, but because the co-worker originally targeted claimed to have supported an ailing mother. Gilgi is pregnant, but does not tell Martin for fear of changing their relationship. She goes to a doctor who will not perform an abortion, but hints he would help if she showed signs of a miscarriage. An old friend shows up and tells her of his financial trouble. When Gilgi visits his wife, she tells Gilgi she is pregnant with their third child. Gilgi promises to help them, but when they come to her for money, she lapses back into lethargy. She brings them money a day late and finds the entire family dead of suicide. This event brings her to the conclusion that she must leave Martin; as much as they love each other, they make each other miserable. The novel ends with her on a train for Berlin ready to face the challenges of supporting herself and her child.

Krey, Franz. *Maria und der Paragraph* (1931). Maria, a typist, gets pregnant and has abortion. She has come down with an infection and is also being blackmailed by the office cleaning lady who gave her the name of the midwife. When the cleaning lady again pumps her for money, Maria kills her in a fever-induced fog. Frau Mayer, the wife of Maria's boss, receives a letter from an unrelated blackmailer. Without admitting to the abortion she had in Switzerland, they call in the police who set up a sting. The boyfriend of a beauty and massage salon operator, who does abortions on the side, is blackmailing clients.
The files are confiscated and 300 clients are implicated. Frau Meier, the wife of a teacher gets caught, whereas Frau Mayer, who mistakenly got the first blackmail note, does not. Maria eventually is found out and serves time in jail. The fellow who got her pregnant breaks up with her because she is no longer any fun. While waiting to start her sentence, she runs into a widower whose late wife was in the same hospital room as Maria. The widower not only needs help with his children and the household, but also needs an outlet for his sexual urges so that he does not begin to molest his teen-age daughter. One widow in his building is jealous and tries to disparage Maria for her abortion conviction, but it comes out that all the women in the building at one time or another have had an abortion. Maria and the widower plan to marry after she serves her time.

Ottwalt, Ernst. *Denn sie wissen, was sie tun* (1931). As a law student, Friedrich Wilhelm Dickmann gets a girl from lower social class pregnant. She comes to him for help, but he lets himself be convinced that the pregnancy is her own fault and she is not worth helping. He ignores her and then goes home for the semester break. She dies of an infection after going to a midwife for an abortion. Dickmann later becomes a judge. He is torn between the notion that laws are immutable and must be followed to the letter and a vague, but undeveloped sense of social justice. Although he learns that his father, who was also a judge, was involved with unethical activities, he remains unable to break out of his class-determined opinions.

Rehfisch, Hans Jose. *Der Frauenarzt* (1929). Dr. Fechner spends most of his time in a bar after losing his gynecological practice following an abortion conviction. He saves the life of a wealthy woman's daughter who was in a car accident. The woman finances a new practice where he caters to the complaints of his rich clientele. An acquaintance from the bar, the typist Lotte, pressures Fechner into performing an abortion. Neither her new, steadily employed fiancé nor her old boyfriend are to find out about her pregnancy. Lotte's ex-boyfriend figures it out and tries to blackmail Fechner, who chooses to close the practice rather than live with the threat of getting caught again.

Schönlank, Bruno. *Verfluchter Segen* (1920). Frau Werder has grown frustrated at living in a working class neighborhood and wants her husband to open a practice in a more affluent part of town, befitting their station in life. Werder, a brooding sort, feels a need to use his knowledge to help those less fortunate. Willi and Ema Schanz have two children and a third on the way. Schanz has lost his job because of cutbacks at the factory. Things have gotten so bad that a neighbor cooks their potatoes for them as their gas service has been disconnected. They ask Dr. Werder to perform an abortion, but he turns them down. Frau Schanz is desperate and threatens to drown herself if no one helps. Schanz runs into a former co-worker who has turned to crime to survive and offers to let Schanz in on the racket. On his way home, a crowd has gathered
around a body pulled out of the canal which turns out to be his wife. The bodies of his two children are recovered as well. The play ends with Schanz and his friends discussing becoming politically involved in order to change society.

Wolf, Friedrich. *Cyankali* (1929). Hete Fent, a factory worker promoted to the office, gets pregnant by her boyfriend, Paul. Paul is active in the union and he loses his job because of political activities. Hete goes first to Prosnik, the building superintendent, who makes sexual advances. She goes to a doctor who will not help. Paul steals a gynecological syringe from Prosnik, and Hete tries to induce an abortion herself, but stops because it is too painful. She goes to a midwife who turns her away after she sees that Hete has injured herself. But the midwife does give her some potassium cyanide, giving her strict instructions not to exceed the dosage. With an infection brewing, Hete goes to her mother. Hete takes an overdose of the poison just before the police arrive. Mutter Fent is arrested for aiding and abetting an abortion. Paul blames the doctors who would not help and society for abandoning the working class.

Zweig, Arnold. *Junge Frau von 1914* (1931). An upper-middle class university student, Lenore Wahl, gets pregnant by her artist boyfriend, Bertin. Bertin gets drafted before he knows of the pregnancy. Lenore goes to a doctor who performed an abortion on a friend. She disguises herself as a provincial bumpkin, and the doctor turns her away because she is healthy and because he does not believe she can keep it a secret. He does, however, tell her what symptoms would allow him to intervene and terminate the pregnancy. She is so dazed that she does not pick up on his advice. She confides in her brother, who seeks advice from a former coach, who has ties to the Social Democrats. David then arranges for a midwife to induce a miscarriage and a doctor to provide follow-up care in a hospital. He also provides her with the money, since he has access to his money, whereas hers is set aside for her dowry. Bertin did try to give Lenore authorization to cash an advance check from his publisher to use for the operation, but a bad telephone connection prevents her from getting the information. When Bertin is back on leave, he is too preoccupied with his war experiences to have any interest in what Lenore’s suffered through.
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