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COMBATING THE BANALITY OF EVIL: PORTRAYALS OF
THE LITERARY FEMALE VILLAIN IN GÜNTER GRASS'S
DANZIGER TRILOGIE AND NOVELLA, *IM KREBSGANG*

By

Joseph E. Baumgarten

A thesis submitted to the faculty of

Brigham Young University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Department of Germanic and Slavic Languages

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BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

COMBATING THE BANALITY OF EVIL: PORTRAYALS OF THE LITERARY FEMALE VILLAIN IN GÜNTER GRASS'S *DANZIGER TRILOGIE* AND NOVELLA, *IM KREBSGANG*

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Master of Arts

In Günter Grass's *Danzig Trilogy* and novella, *Im Krebsgang*, an antagonistic female type makes a repeated appearance. She appears in the guise of Susi Kater and Luzie Rennwand in *Die Blechtrommel*, and as Tulla Pokriefke in the other works, *Katz und Maus*, *Hundejahre*, and *Im Krebsgang*. This antagonistic female type is not like other women in these works. A review of *Le Deuxième Sexe* by feminist Simone de Beauvoir reveals several crucial components contributing to woman's position in society. Most essentially, a woman's natural attributes and (dis)abilities and the conventions of society have enforced her historical submission to man. This thesis analyzes how the antagonistic female type, or villain, compares and contrasts with other female figures in these works by Grass, according to a paradigm derived from Beauvoir's description of woman. From this analysis, a better understanding of the female villain's nature emerges. Indeed, such a

comparison demonstrates that certain female figures in the works of Grass transcend their historically oppressed or subdued status by refusing to submit to those natural handicaps and societal restrictions identified by Beauvoir, and thus become a threat to man's status or security as an antagonistic female type, or villain. However, the villain figure is not always inherently evil, but possesses the capacity to change. The villain and victim can reconcile their differences and may even form a friendly relationship. This evolving villain-victim duality becomes most clear in Grass's work, *Im Krebsgang*, and suggests the possibility of assuaging contemporary conflicts as educators sympathize with the experiences of both extremist groups and victimized parties and help them come to terms with their differences.

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INTRODUCTION

In a speech given to audiences in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem in 1967, entitled “Rede von der Gewöhnung,” Günter Grass concedes Germany’s collective responsibility for Holocaust crimes, and he calls attention to society’s predilection towards *Gewöhnung* following such calamities (14: 220-33).¹ Translated as habituation or accommodation, Grass’s use of the word *Gewöhnung* seems to refer to the attitude or policy of compromising, obliging, or adapting to a given situation at the expense of certain values or standards. This problem of habituation, according to Grass, is common to all ages of human history when humans have persisted in perpetuating the oppression and destruction of human lives and cultures. He mentions the annihilation of the American Indians as one of the many tragic examples of destructive human relations, which has too often been overlooked by policy makers and intellectuals, when its societal significance might have provided impetus for preventing similar tragedies. Recognizing the Holocaust as a recent instance of this habituation, Grass insists that society in general, and specific policy makers in particular, have failed to grasp its implications and continue to exploit the weak and the helpless in order to achieve their own egoistic ends. Through this speech, he implicates Germany, Israel, the United States of America, and all of society in contributing to this increasing habituation and indifference, resulting in persecution and suffering.

¹ Hereafter, all in-text parenthetical notations will refer to a volume and page number in Günter Grass, *Günter Grass: Werkausgabe*, ed. Volker Neuhaus and Daniela Hermes, 18 vols. to date (Göttingen: Steidl, 1997-).

Grass's efforts to combat what he views as increasing indifference and habituation dominate much of his literary and artistic oeuvre. His first major work, *Die Blechtrommel*, treats this theme from the perspective of Oskar Matzerath, a midget, who is not only the victim of persecution, but also responsible for the suffering of others. Two other works, *Katz und Maus* and *Hundejahre*, contribute to Grass's treatment of human suffering and persecution prior to, during, and in the aftermath of the Second World War. In 2001, Grass published another work of historical fiction, *Im Krebsgang*, which revisits some of the pain and suffering of anti-Semitism in Germany during the Nazi era and also in contemporary times, while simultaneously exploring the issue of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* in post-War Germany. In these works, Grass indirectly poses questions, such as: Has Germany, or the rest of society, learned from the tragedies of the past? Why have the tragedies of the past slipped into oblivion along with their significance and implications for society's present-day dilemmas? Together, *Die Blechtrommel*, *Katz und Maus*, *Hundejahre*, and *Im Krebsgang* form a cohesive protest against the habituation that permits or overlooks persecution and suffering, particularly in those instances where a person or entity discriminates against, exploits, or harms a victim.

In these works, the female villain ranks among those responsible for physically or mentally hurting victims. The most notable of these villains include Luzie Rennwand of *Die Blechtrommel* and Tulla Pokriefke of *Katz und Maus*, *Hundejahre*, and *Im Krebsgang*. These two villains persecute their victims by mocking them and promulgating their inferiority among peers. They cause bodily harm to some victims and criminate others, who eventually perish as a result. The female villain is the temptress,

the traitress, and the culpable malefactress. However, she cannot act alone, for her role requires an Other, someone whom she can injure or exploit. True, she causes suffering and pain, but an Other is necessary to serve as the victim of those unpleasant circumstances caused by the villain. At the same time, these female figures have somehow earned the unpleasant distinction of being villains; this distinction is also a form of discrimination and engenders prejudice. My objective, then, is to demonstrate what these figures have done, or what it is in their personalities, that distinguishes them from other women as villains in the works of Günter Grass. While the female villain is responsible for the pain and suffering of her victims, her unwillingness or inability to acclimate to the demands of society has contributed to her position as a victim of society's inclination for habituation.

In order to better apprehend the position of the female villain in Grass's works, I will refer to the ideas of Simone de Beauvoir as found in her work, *Le Deuxième Sexe*. Beauvoir is often regarded as the "mother of contemporary feminism" and the "greatest source of inspiration for new feminism."² Indeed, some scholars maintain that her work *Le Deuxième Sexe* "is surely a classic," because it "creates a new paradigm" for the "analysis of woman."³ Although Beauvoir articulates her ideas in vituperative hyperbole, an analysis of her views on woman's biological and historical role in past and present (early 20th century) societies provides a useful foundation for comparing the women and

² Mary Evens, *Simone de Beauvoir*, Women of Ideas, ed. Liz Stanley (London: Sage, 1996) 1; and Alice Schwarzer, *Simone de Beauvoir Today: Conversations 1972-1982*, trans. Marianne Howarth (London: Hogarth, 1984) 67.

³ Jo-Ann Pilardi, "Feminists Read *The Second Sex*," *Feminist Interpretations of Simone de Beauvoir*, ed. Margaret A. Simons (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State U., 1995) 29-30.

the female villain as they are depicted in the works of Grass. Indeed, such a comparison demonstrates that certain female figures assume the role of villains in the works of Grass and transcend their oppressed or subdued status by refusing to submit to those natural handicaps and societal restrictions identified by Beauvoir, and thus become a threat to man's status or security.

In her book *Le Deuxième Sexe* (first published in 1949), Beauvoir disputes that woman in general has ever held a superior status over man, or that society in general has ever regarded man and woman as equals. Speaking in the abstract about the historical man-woman relationship, Beauvoir questions the nature of woman's purportedly immanent Otherness.⁴ Unlike the typical Otherness relationship, where the Same and the Other might find their roles reversed according to different contexts and perspectives, the man-woman relationship has never possessed this reciprocity since man through his privileged position has prevailed over woman and continues to endeavor to maintain that position.⁵ Man's privileged position over woman is historical, especially because her biological disadvantages, including her inferior physical strength and (burdensome) reproductive role, have compelled her to depend on man for survival.⁶ Beauvoir concludes that woman's disadvantage derives historically from biological factors and societal conventions and attitudes.

The biological influences governing woman's status and role may be divided into

⁴ Simone de Beauvoir, *Le Deuxième Sexe*, vol. 1 (Paris: Gallimard, 1949) 17; English translation from H. M. Parshley, *The Second Sex* (New York: Knopf, 1964) xviii.

⁵ *Ibid.* 1: 107; 61.

⁶ Karen Vintges, "The Second Sex and Philosophy," trans. Anne Lavelle, *Feminist Interpretations of Simone de Beauvoir*, ed. Margaret A. Simons (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State U., 1995) 56.

three basic categories, namely woman's physical stature, her reproductive role, and her sexual role. According to Beauvoir's account, women have at certain times, particularly during the pre-agricultural period, exhibited a "courage et de cruauté" equal to man's, in spite of his superior strength.⁷ That man has always been physically stronger than woman is not being disputed.⁸ Her point seems to be that woman would be physically capable of surviving without man's assistance, were it not for the "servitudes de la reproduction."⁹ In spite of woman's adequate strength, her lesser physical capabilities and the demands of reproduction did compel her to capitulate to man, especially when he was capable of physically enforcing her obedience. As evident in the works of Grass, some women (like Ulla the Muse) yield to the demands of man as a defense mechanism to avoid brutal beatings, because they are not strong enough to defend themselves otherwise.

In contrast, the female villain in the works of Grass is not the typical woman who is categorically inferior to man in terms of physical strength and ability. While not necessarily stronger than man physically, she nevertheless displays either equal or superior physical abilities. For instance, one female villain manages the difficult task of swimming a considerable distance to a sunken minesweeper, a challenging feat for boys her age (4: 11, 38). Volker Neuhaus suggests further that her abilities and physical characteristics are almost supernatural, comparing her to Mörike's nixen figure named Lau.¹⁰ Unlike some of the other women in these works, these types of figures, though thin

⁷ Beauvoir 1: 108; "ferocity and cruelty" 62.

⁸ Ibid. 1: 68, 108; 31, 62.

⁹ Ibid. 1: 108; "bondage of reproduction" 62.

¹⁰ Volker Neuhaus, "Belle Tulla sans merci." *Die "Danziger Trilogie" von Günter Grass: Texte, Daten, Bilder* ed. Volker Neuhaus and Daniela Hermes (Frankfurt am Maine: Luchterhand, 1991) 187.

and delicate physically, do not relinquish their will at the threat of a beating, but persist and usually succeed in achieving their objectives (3: 500, 4: 40, 5: 405-6, 6: 201-2). Other female villains in Grass's works similarly challenge society's expectations for them as members of the physically weaker sex.

In addition to woman's lack of strength, Beauvoir argues that the burden of woman's reproductive role continues even in contemporary (early 20th century) society to impede woman's efforts to win independence from man.¹¹ Woman has had to submit to man for sustenance and support while she is engaged in fulfilling the reproductive demands of her species. Once committed to pregnancy, a woman (until recent times) was unable to escape it without forceful and risky abortion. Alfred Matzerath, in *Die Blechtrommel* for instance, speculates that his wife is indulging in fatty seafoods because she is trying to terminate a pregnancy from another man, likely Jan Bronski (3: 206). Beauvoir reminds us that "la fécondation est bien loin de représenter pour [la femme] l'achèvement du processus sexuel; c'est à ce moment au contraire que commence le service réclamé d'elle par l'espèce: il se réalise lentement, péniblement dans la grossesse, l'accouchement, l'allaitement."¹² As the "proie de l'espèce,"¹³ woman can only rarely match her male counterpart in terms of material production, at least not in a sufficient manner so that she can survive as a mother independently from man. The travail required

¹¹ Beauvoir 2: 290-301; 484-92.

¹² Ibid. 2: 133; "fecundation by no means represents for [woman] the completion of the sexual process; on the contrary, her service to the species only begins at this point: it is fulfilled slowly and painfully, in pregnancy, childbirth, and lactation" 374.

¹³ Ibid. 1: 56, 62-9; "victim of the species" 20, 29-32.

by menstruation, pregnancy, parturition, and lactation is one of the disadvantages that has allowed man to subdue her and enforce a history of oppression and subjugation.

The female villain in the works of Grass, however, frequently rejects the normal position of woman as a nurturer and procreator. Even the villain figure who desires to give birth to a child is barren, endeavoring to conceive for a long period of time through any willing partner, and then having a miscarriage when she is finally successful. We learn in *Im Krebsgang* that one of these villains has a child, but her care for the child is marked by neglect, and she is accused of ultimately corrupting her grandchild rather than nurturing him according to the expectations of her society. Instead of bringing forth life and sustaining it, she abuses it and takes it. Indeed, the villains Niobe, Luzie Rennwand, and Tulla Pokriefke seem more closely associated with death and despair. Finally, the female villain even seems to exploit her pregnancy and childbearing role. Instead of allowing her role as nurturer and procreator to subject her to oppression, she uses it to subjugate man to her will.

While the reproductive function of the normal woman serves to handicap her, her sexual role is a disadvantage that further subjects her to man's power. As Beauvoir suggests, man does not merely see woman, but he sees a woman's body, which is "l'objet que déjà il convoitait."¹⁴ A woman's body stimulates man's lust, even when it is not in the process of giving him pleasure. A man thus regards not just a woman's exterior features, but also those clothed, concealed features, the features that give him erotic pleasure and provoke his lustful passions. For instance, the narrator of *Katz und Maus*

¹⁴ Ibid. 2: 140; "the object he already desires" 380.

implies that he and a friend would like to undertake “etwas Dolles” with his cute cousins from Berlin, and that the intended “etwas Dolles” is not just the “übliche[...] Knutchereien” (3: 55). These boys have relegated their female acquaintances to the status of sex objects, with the one principle function of sex. In viewing the woman thus, man has confined her to a specific role as “un être sexué,”¹⁵ who possesses the capacity to gratify his sexual appetites.

Woman’s role as a sex object extends beyond the superficial implications of her sexual potential. Although the woman also finds pleasure through the attention and treatment she receives as such an object, and although she might be able to slake some of her own passions in the process, her role as a sex object nevertheless restricts her to man’s actual use and satisfaction. According to Beauvoir, the woman is always subject to man in matters of sex, for “Fût-elle provocante, consentante, c’est lui de toutes façons qui la prend: elle est prise.”¹⁶ Again, Beauvoir emphasizes the male’s leading role: “C’est lui — comme chez presque tous les animaux — qui a le rôle agressif, tandis qu’elle subit son étreinte.”¹⁷ Among the examples from Grass’s works, Roswitha Raguna surrenders to Oskar Matzerath in *Die Blechtrommel*, and Harry Liebenau emerges as the aggressor with Jenny Brunies in *Hundejahre* (3: 429-30, 5: 372). Beauvoir does acknowledge that woman plays a role in sex, that she can seduce and participate, but she also insists that woman’s role is unequal to that of man’s and that her role is biologically one that requires

¹⁵ Ibid. 1: 15; “a sexual being” xvi.

¹⁶ Ibid. 1:56; “Even when she is willing, or provocative, it is unquestionably the male who takes the female—she is taken” 21.

¹⁷ Ibid. 2: 133; “It is the male—as in most animals—who has the aggressive role, the female submitting to his embrace” 373.

her to submit, yield, be penetrated. Whether man is viewing or using woman as a sex object, Beauvoir maintains that woman is at his mercy because of her capacity to please him.

The female villain in the works of Grass might not necessarily subvert the sexual role required of her in all respects. However, where she is treated as a sex object, she uses such treatment to give her an advantage over her would-be male oppressors. The narrator of *Die Blechtrommel* imagines that a female villain utilizes her sexuality to seduce damning court testimony from his cohorts (3: 503-6). Another female villain attempts to exact a *Gymnasium* teacher's acquiescence to her demands through sex (6: 228-9). Rather than being subjected to man's will, the villain finds greater freedom and success through her sexual role. In addition, she thereby upsets his superior position and threatens his safety and security.

In addition to the biological factors, Beauvoir points to a societal convention that has enforced woman's inferior position in society, the cultural requirement of marriage. According to Beauvoir, marriage was part of a male-oriented society, and a means whereby man could maintain influence and domination over woman. Beauvoir explains the limiting implications of this practice thus: "Même dans les collectivités où se rencontre une grande liberté sexuelle, il convient que la femme qui met un enfant au monde soit mariée; elle ne réussit pas à constituer, seule avec sa progéniture, un groupe autonome; et la protection religieuse de son frère ne suffit pas; la présence d'un époux est exigée."¹⁸ Woman could not remain alone with her offspring to lead a life of her own

¹⁸ Ibid. 1: 122; "Even in groups where great sexual freedom exists, it is proper for the woman who brings a child into the world to be married; she is unable to form an autonomous group, alone with her progeny. And the religious protection of her brother is insufficient: the presence of a spouse is required." 72.

choosing. Rather, her handicaps in primitive times and societal expectations in later times forced her to rely on man for her survival, even though this dependence required her to relinquish her individual sovereignty. Extremely critical of society's connubial requirements for woman, Beauvoir harshly declares that woman's subjugated role as a wife does not differ from that of a prostitute, for the "structure du mariage comme aussi l'existence des prostituées en est la preuve: la femme se donne, l'homme la rémunère et la prend"¹⁹ Thus marriage is a legal form of prostitution, but the length of the contract or agreement persists for a longer period of time. Under such a contract or agreement, the wife allows the consummation of marriage and agrees to participate in a sexual relationship with her husband. She is bound to him sexually, and must suffer severe social and sometimes legal consequences for any adulterous affairs.

Marriage relationships in the works of Grass will help to illustrate. In *Die Blechtrommel*, Joseph Koljaiczek marries Anna Bronski almost immediately after their affair, and she remains with him, following him loyally until he eventually drowns or escapes (3: 23-39). Lina Greff and Gretchen Scheffler stay with their husbands, even though their husbands make little effort to satisfy their sexual needs (3: 382, 116). In contrast, the female villain does not usually participate in marriage. Instead, she changes her partners frequently or has multiple partners simultaneously, exploiting her relationship with each of them.

In *Le Deuxième Sexe*, Beauvoir thus argues that the average woman lives in a society where men and cultural expectations (determined by men) "lui imposent de

¹⁹ Ibid. 2: 134; "The nature of marriage, as well as the existence of prostitutes, is the proof: woman gives herself, man pays her and takes her" 374.

s'assumer comme l'Autre."²⁰ As the Other, the average woman has not enjoyed the same privileges and benefits enjoyed by man, has only infrequently occupied leadership positions or risked subverting or challenging male authority. (In contrast, the female villain of Grass's works frequently assumes leadership roles, even over other male figures.) Because society requires woman to be involved in a chaste and moral marital relationship, she cannot express her sexuality with as much freedom, or, like Agnes Matzerath in *Die Blechtrommel*, she risks societal disapproval (3: 206). Much less than an equal partner with man in connubiality, "elle est pour l'homme une partenaire sexuelle, une reproductrice, un objet érotique, une Autre à travers laquelle il se cherche lui-même," Beauvoir argues.²¹ Woman has attained an inferior status because of the handicaps that nature has bestowed on her through her physical inferiority and her reproductive and sexual functions.

The average woman as the Other must conform to the roles that society requires of her; otherwise, she risks obtaining a vitiated reputation. In the works of Grass, the female nonconformist and challenger becomes the female villain. She is compared to a female dog, or she receives the blame for pain and suffering. The female villain in the works of Grass thus becomes the Other of all Others, because she cannot be considered a normal woman, and because she often receives worse treatment by man who sees in her a challenge to his superior status. As we shall see in the following chapters, when a woman defies man's superior status and threatens his security by resisting or conquering nature's

²⁰ Ibid. 1: 31; "compel her to assume the status of Other" xxix.

²¹ Ibid. 1: 103; "She is for man a sexual partner, a reproducer, an erotic object—an Other through whom he seeks himself" 59.

and society's handicaps, she assumes the role of a villain.

However, the villain's position in relation to her victim is not hopelessly permanent. Specifically, Tulla Pokriefke and Jenny Brunies Angustri in *Krebsgang* overcome their prejudices and become close friends, in spite of the damage that Tulla has inflicted on Jenny and her family in the past. Tulla's behavior and actions in this last work do not make her exempt from classification as a villain, but they nevertheless point to her evolving relationship with a former victim, Jenny. In this way, Grass continues his efforts to combat what he perceives as the problem of habituation in society by suggesting that radical entities can change, that their victims can forgive, and that both, through the proper, empathizing education, can reconcile their differences and eventually live together in peace and friendship.

Chapter 1: The Five Female Villains in *Die Blechtrommel*

Persecution and suffering are recurrent themes in *Die Blechtrommel*, which Günter Grass completed and published by 1959. The narrator through most of this work is Oskar Matzerath, who recounts in autobiographical form the important events of his life and of those related to him, including his grandmother, Anna Bronski. Oscar's autobiographical account is divided into three books, the first of which treats his familial origins, his birth, and early childhood, during the years prior to World War Two. The second book concerns Oskar's development and sexual maturation, and occurs during the war. Set during the post-war years, the third book recounts Oskar's adventures as a stonecutter's apprentice, art model, and entertainer in the Zwiebelkeller and throughout Germany, and concludes with his anxious reflections about Susi Kater, Luzie Rennwand, Niobe, and the Schwarze Köchin (3: 776-9). Indeed, these four female figures, in addition to Maria Truczinski, assume the role of female villains in this work because they transcend the natural or societal handicaps that subjugate other women, and because they threaten man's status and security.

In order to demonstrate the extent of these figure's resistance to the restrictions of nature and society, it is necessary to contrast their behavior with that of the more typical female figure, such as Anna Bronski Koljaiczek (Oma), Agnes Koljaiczek Matzerath (Mama), and others. Conforming to those restrictions dictated by nature and society, these women find themselves oppressed by man because of their physical inferiority, sexuality, reproductive role, and because of societal conventions. Certainly, these figures

do not conform to their expected role in every aspect. However, when they do not submit to these roles, their husbands, partners, friends, or associates vilify them, treating them as sinners, as traitors, or by blaming them for their troubles.

The first of these restrictions or handicaps, woman's physical inferiority, influences a woman's ability to assert herself and act independently. Although her strength or lack thereof has not actually affected woman's status in general since before the middle ages, a woman's physical characteristics nonetheless may still carry some weight in individual cases, such as when an overly large and overbearing woman forces her husband's submission, or when a woman's frail physiology subjects her to her mate's physical abuses. In *Die Blechtrommel*, the case of Ulla the Muse is perhaps the most salient example that demonstrates how a woman's inferior strength might subject her to man's oppression.

Most likely, Oskar refers to Ulla as the Muse because of her part in inspiring her partner Lankes with artistic creativity, especially as the object of his sadistic tendencies. Indeed, Oskar reports that Lankes' artistic ability achieves its "wahre schöpferische Potenz" through these beatings (620). These beatings not only prompt Lanke's creativity, but they also serve to prompt Ulla's obedience and submission. Described as fragile and overly-thin (618), she momentarily refuses Lankes' order to join Oskar as a model and muse in the art academy. But this was a passing state of audacity, because Lanke acts quickly to ensure her compunction and compliance:

Doch jener gab ihr trocken und wortlos, wie es begabte Maler gerne tun,
mit großer Hand einige Ohrfeigen, fragte sie nochmals und lachte
zufrieden, schon wieder gutmütig, als sie sich schluchzend, genau wie ein

Engel weinend, bereit erklärte, für die Maler der Kunstakademie zum gutbezahlten Modell und womöglich zur Muse zu werden. (618)

On another occasion, Lankes aggressively beats her into submission to discourage her from accepting Oskar's invitation to accompany him on a trip (712). Ulla is compelled to capitulate her volition and submit to Lankes' demands because of her frailty and physical disadvantage. In order to protect herself, she must yield rather than fight back. It is also important to note how Oskar describes her as an angel because of her contrite crying and submissive attitude. Although Oskar becomes acquainted with Ulla while she is wearing an angel costume, he later compares her with an angel because she behaves in a manner that he and Lankes find acceptable.

Ulla the Muse is also unable to transcend her oppressed role as a sexual object. We do not know of her relationship with Lankes, but we do learn from Oskar of the artist Raskolnikoff's interest in her. He typically positions her in provocative poses, which eventually prompt his artistic creativity (620). Although the artist does not make physical contact with her, he exploits her sensitivities, whispering about "Schuld und Sühne," and exposes her most private parts to his undeviating stare (620). While a female villain would use such situations to her advantage, Ulla does not benefit from these experiences, with the exception of her wages, which are however likely controlled by Lanke: "Der Maler Lankes... behandelte sie besser, seitdem sie regelmäßig Geld nach Hause brachte" (619). Although we do not know how Lankes treats Ulla sexually, we do learn from Oskar how he treats another woman as an object, without regard for her emotions or safety.

While Lankes and Oskar are vacationing at the Normandy bunkers in France, they

observe a group of nuns approaching on the beach. The last nun lagging behind the group, Schwester Agnete, pauses at their bunker, and Lankes invites her to take a look at their “Villa” and enjoy from the inside the “hübsche Aussicht” (722-3). She enters the bunker, and Lankes follows her inside. According to Oskar’s suggestive description of the event, Lankes and Schwester Agnete have some kind of sexual experience, for her frock is torn during the encounter and Oskar insists, “Gewiß wird sie jetzt unglücklich sein” (725). “Unglücklich” is an understatement — she takes her life (726). Oskar informs Lankes of the sister’s intentions, but Lankes does not seem to care about her unhappiness or that she will probably drown: “‘Du Unmensch!’ schrie ich. ‘Und wenn sie nun ertrinkt?’ Lankes schloß die Augen: ‘Dann heißt das Bild: Ertrinkende Nonnen’” (726). Having already satisfied his appetite (for fish and sex), Lankes does not see why he should further concern himself with this person who seems to be devastated by the encounter. He has used her much like one would use and then discard a disposable item. Lankes succeeded in finding both pleasure and inspiration through his experience with the nun. She, on the other hand, must have felt used, useless, and discarded. Lankes’ treatment of Schwester Agnete demonstrates how woman is often oppressed by man because of her sexual capacity.

Oskar is also guilty of using woman’s ability to satisfy his sexual curiosity and urges. Similar to Lankes’ relationship with Schwester Agnete, Oskar uses Frau Lina Greff’s superficial sexual capacity and then discards her when he is finished with her. He does not seem to nurture a close, intimate relationship with Frau Greff, but only visits her to perform sex experiments (3: 398-401). Indeed, Oskar’s account suggests that Frau Greff has little choice but to comply: “Die kränkliche Lina Greff jedoch war ans Bett

gebunden, konnte mir nicht ausweichen, mich nicht verlassen, denn ihre Krankheit war zwar langwierig, doch nicht ersthaft genug, als daß der Tod mir die Lehrerin Lina hätte vorzeitig nehmen können” (3: 401). At the age of seventeen and eighteen, Oskar visits her regularly, and then ceases his visits “da er seine Studien als abgeschlossen betrachten konnte” and because he feels his estrangement from Maria is past (3: 401, 410). True, Frau Greff might have benefited from how Oskar’s company eased her boring and unpleasant condition, but she was also subject to his demands. He chooses when to come and when to leave, and he only comes in the first place because of her sexual capacity. In Oskar’s association with Frau Greff, he dictates how their carnal relationship is to continue, while she is subject to his demands.

Additional incidences in this book involving Oskar and other women fit the pattern of sexual domination, as discussed by Beauvoir. As discussed in the first chapter, she maintains that the normal woman must typically surrender herself in coitus (373). This can be illustrated through a couple of examples from *Die Blechtrommel*. The first instance takes place during Oskar’s first sexual encounter with Roswitha Raguna. He describes their roles thus:

Ich suchte ihre Angst ab, sie suchte meinen Mut ab. Schließlich wurde ich etwas ängstlich, sie aber bekam Mut. Und als ich ihr das erste Mal die Angst vertrieben, ihr Mut gemacht hatte, erhob sich mein männlicher Mut schon zum zweitenmal. Während mein Mut herrliche achtzehn Jahre zählte, verfiel sie, ich weiß nicht, im wievielten Lebensjahr stehend, zum wievieltenmal liegend ihrer geschulden, mir Mut machenden Angst. Denn genau wie ihr Gesicht hatte auch ihr sparsam bemessener und dennoch

vollzähliger Körper nichts mit der Spuren grabenden Zeit gemeinsam.

Zeitlos mutig und zeitlos ängstlich ergab sich mir eine Roswitha. (430).

Their love-making implies a mutual interaction, until the end when Roswitha surrenders herself to Oskar. In this case, the woman participates, but the man ultimately dominates.

The second instance takes place while Oskar is living at the Zeidler apartment house. At this time, he has a fanatical infatuation for a certain nurse, Schwester Dorothea Köngetter. As with Roswitha Raguna, Oskar is more aggressive with Schwester Dorothea. While he spends his idle moments fantasizing about her and listening to her activities in the adjoining apartment, she barely knows of his existence as a neighbor. His fascination for her progresses to the point that he begins investigating her background and keeping track of her acquaintances, such as Dr. Werner and Schwester Beate, through the mail she receives. For example, in reading one of Dr. Werner's letters, he claims to learn of an intimated love affair between the two (659). He also secretly enters her apartment and scrutinizes her possessions to learn more background information (643-7). He then examines the contents of her wardrobe and finally, finding erotic pleasure in nestling amongst her apparel, he engages in autoerotism (647-653). Indeed, his interest in her is connected with his need for sexual stimulation, "denn ich öffnete mir mit der freien Hand die Hosenknöpfe und machte das, um mir die Krankenschwester... wieder vorstellen zu können" (653). Unknowingly, Schwester Dorothea has become for Oskar a sexual object. He encounters her coincidentally in the bathroom one day and attempts to rape her (678-80). According to Oskar's account, he is the one who tries to take her, while she surrenders to him under the impression that he is Satan.

Certainly, other women in the text are treated as sex objects and either voluntarily

or unwillingly submit to man's sexual demands. In at least three cases, the women have become pregnant, which is another of nature's handicaps discussed by Beauvoir. Anna Bronski Koljaiczek, Oskar's grandmother, immediately marries and stays with Joseph Koljaiczek following her conception of Agnes (23). Agnes Koljaiczek Matzerath, Oskar's mother, becomes pregnant at the same time that she is having an affair with Jan and begins gorging on large amounts of fish and eels. When she becomes ill and is hospitalized, Alfred Matzerath suspects that she is trying to end her pregnancy (2: 206). Maria Truczinski is similarly fearful of an illegitimate pregnancy, likely because of the negative social stigma attached to such an outcome. For this reason, she takes special precautions during her affair with Alfred Matzerath, warning him, "vorsichtig zu sein" and "diesmal besonders aufzupassen" (372-3). Nevertheless, she does get pregnant on that occasion due to Oskar's meddling. In order to conform to social requirements, and notwithstanding her already damaged image and reputation, she submits herself to Alfred Matzerath and marries him (373-4). All of these women who discover themselves to be pregnant eventually marry the person who is perceived as the one responsible for helping them conceive,²² or the one most capable of supporting them economically as they care for the child.

As one of society's conventions, marriage is a common recourse (though certainly not the only alternative in modern times) for women who are pregnant, possess little means for maintaining an adequate livelihood, and wish to avoid the cultural stigma of giving birth to an illegitimate child. According to Beauvoir, marriage is another means of

²² However, Oskar repeatedly questions the notion that Alfred Matzerath is his biological father, often referring to him as his "mutmaßlicher Vater" (3: 208, 210, 313, 318-20, 373-4, 518, 529-30, 662, etc.).

binding woman to man, of keeping her dependent on man for her physical and social survival.²³ The three women mentioned above marry as a consequence of their pregnancies. However, at least two other marriage unions are apparent in this text, which are not the result of a pregnancy, the marriages of the Greffs and the Schefflers.

Lina Bartsch originally meets Herr Greff at a catholic fellowship society, and then eventually marries him in compliance with her vicar's recommendations. According to Oskar, Lina Greff's nuptial union with Herr Greff is tolerable: "So kann man sagen, die Greffsche Ehe war eine gute Ehe. Der Gemüsehändler schlug seine Frau nicht, betrog sie niemals mit anderen Frauen, war weder ein Trinker noch ein Prasser, war vielmehr ein lustiger, solide gekleideter Mann" (3: 386). Although Oskar offers some evidence of how this marriage relationship is commendable, he also indicates that neither partner is completely satisfied with the arrangement: "Die Greffsche Ehe [bestand] eben darin..., daß beide Ehepartner sich gegenseitig alle Absonderlichkeiten nachsahen" (3: 386). In fact, Oskar reports that Lina Greff "heiratete als Zweiundzwanzigjährige, wie sie später immer wieder beteuerte, vollkommen unerfahren, auf Anraten des Vikars hin, den Greff" (3: 385). Oskar speculates that her discontent with the marriage is only part of the reason why she turns to promiscuous behavior. Herr Greff's lack of interest in her, combined with her need for attention, motivates this culturally unacceptable behavior: "Die Greffsche verschlammte, weil der Gemüsehändler und der Luftschutzwart nicht den rechten Blick für ihre unbekümmerte und etwas stupide Üppigkeit hatte" (3: 382). Her licentious behavior illustrates her discontent with her current conjugal union with a man

²³ Beauvoir 122; 72.

who does not appreciate her. In addition, she is stuck and confined by societal expectations in a position that does not satisfy her.

Gretchen Scheffler is in a similar position. Married almost at the same time as Oskar's mother (3: 110), she is still barren in spite of her intense desire to have children: "Gretchen Scheffler hatte keine Kinder, hätte so gerne Kinderchen zum Bestriicken gehabt, hätte, ach lag es am Scheffler, lag es an ihr, so zum Auffressen gerne ein Kindchen behäkelt, beperlt, umrandet und mit Kreuzstichküßchen besetzt" (3: 110). From this equivocal reference to their fertility, the reader cannot determine who is at fault for Gretchen's lack of children. However, Oskar's account provides a few clues as to who may be guilty. Comparing Gretchen with his mother, Oskar explains that she does not have someone like Jan Bronski who can satisfy her concupiscence (111, 116). More specifically, Oskar speculates that Gretchen would have likely reciprocated any affection that her husband had shown her:

Hätte der Scheffler nur in jenen Jahren dann und wann die Finger aus dem Mehl gezogen und die Semmeln der Backstube gegen ein anderes Semmelchen vertauscht. Das Gretchen hätte sich gerne von ihm kneten, walken, einpinseln und backen lassen. Wer weiß, was aus dem Ofen herausgekommen wäre? Am Ende etwa noch ein Kindchen. Es wäre dem Gretchen diese Backfreude zu gönnen gewesen (3: 116)

In his account, Oskar's description of Gretchen's fondness for physical intimacy, whether with his mother or through her fantasies (114-5), and the suggestion that her husband never gives her much attention, implies that Herr Scheffler has sexually neglected her and is therefore responsible for her infertility. Because of this, and like Lina Greff, she seeks

satisfaction where she can find it, and yet she is still confined by cultural demands to her marriage with Herr Scheffler.

The women discussed thus far tend to conform to the roles defined for them by society and by their own physical handicaps. However, because Grass's figures are complex and rarely subject themselves to a simple black-white characterization, exceptions do occasionally appear throughout the text. For instance, Agnes Matzerath does not submit to the societal convention of marital fidelity, since she very clearly pursues a very sexual and intimate relationship with Jan Bronski while still married to Alfred Matzerath. By turning to Jan Bronski, Agnes does not free herself from Matzerath's influence, but merely finds herself further enslaved by a formal relationship with the latter and an emotional, passionate rapport with the former. In the meantime, she does not threaten the security or dominance of either male partner. In addition, her association with death at the end of her life and through the resulting termination of her pregnancy only reflects her desire to disengage herself from her two partners (Reddick 27). Another suspected cause for her sickness and nausea is her despair from the realization that life is meaningless for her (28). Although she is associated with death, and causes the demise of a fetus, she does not thereby achieve (as a villain might) a transcendent position over man as a result.

Frau Greff's sexual liberties with Oskar and other men seem to qualify her for the role as a female villain. Although she is married, she openly exhibits debauchery and sordidity contrary to the comforts of her neighbors and conventions of her culture (3: 386-7). Indeed, she is the only female in the text referred to as a "Schlampe" (3: 382, 386, 776; See also Görtz, Jones, and Keele 265). However, the examples of character

vitiating and her defiance of culture's requirement of marital fidelity do not contribute to a categorical classification of Frau Greff as a female villain, because she does not seem to withstand or overcome the bondage of her marriage with Greff until after his death. In addition, her objective in engaging in immoral behavior is not to defy her husband or the culture's expectations, but to indulge her own appetites. Because Herr Greff refuses to give her any meaningful attention, she turns to other persons, like Oskar (3: 382, 398-401). Moreover, Greff does little to discourage his wife's immoral behavior, for he defends her actions and supplies Oskar with materials for cleaning himself after his experiments with Frau Greff (3: 386-7, 405). In spite of her behavior, Frau Lina Greff remains subjected to her consenting and lenient husband through marriage. And she continues to suffer denigration from her neighbors because she is acting contrary to her culture's customs that demand a stricter morality than she is willing to practice. In spite of their occasional departure from societal expectations, the women in this text nevertheless do not assume the role of villain because their departure does not result in their freedom from man's oppressive influence or authority, and they do not threaten man's status or security.

Contrasting starkly with the average woman in this work, the female villain deviates from those natural handicaps and societal conventions and thereby escapes the state of dependence and oppression to which other women have been consigned. Above all else, these women embody some form of threat to man's security or status. Among the five female villains making an appearance in this text, two are insentient entities, but exercise their feminine influence contrary to the natural and societal restrictions and conventions which confine other women, and thereby stimulate fear and loss of self-

confidence in man. Niobe is a ship's figurehead, now retired in a museum because of superstitious concerns that she is somehow responsible for several tragedies and numerous unexplained deaths. The Schwarze Köchin is a female phantom or imaginary Black Witch²⁴ conceived of by Oskar and derived from some of his recollections of childhood songs and games. Two other female villains portrayed, Susi Kater and Luzie Rennwand, are actual human beings within the scope of this narrative. Maria Truczinski is also a villain, although Oskar does not depict her with as much fear or horror as he does the others; rather, she threatens his security and is responsible for causing him mental pain and suffering. I will discuss first the three human figures, beginning with Maria Truczinski, and then conclude with a discussion of Niobe and the Schwarze Köchin.

Some readers might be surprised to find Maria Truczinski categorized as a female villain, next to figures like Susi Kater or Luzie Rennwand. Indeed, Maria is not as hostile or threatening as some of these characters, yet she nevertheless fails to conform to some of society's restrictions, maintains her independence, and persists as a threat to Oskar's status and security as a man. While it is also true that she gets married and thus submits herself to Alfred Matzerath, this apparent momentary lapse by itself does not exempt her from consideration as a villain. With the exception of this marriage, she does not seem to otherwise comply with the supposed natural restrictions (such as physical inferiority) or the normal conventions of society which might contribute to the oppression of other women, and she is a source of pain and suffering.

²⁴ This is Willson's designation for Grass's term, Schwarze Köchin (132). See also Lawson, who speaks of Tulla Pokriefke as a later human incarnation of the Black Witch (57).

First, Maria does not suffer any form of oppression or subjugation because she is physically weaker than a male figure. Unlike Ulla the Muse, she does not seem to feel threatened or intimidated when confronted with physical abuse (3: 379). However, compared to Lankes' abuse of Ulla, Oskar's attempt to physically punish Maria is relatively harmless, as demonstrated by the manner in which she effortlessly collects his hands, and then endures his biting in her groin area (3: 379). Though a teenager at this time, Oskar is still the size of a three-year-old, and lacks the power to physically enforce her submission. On the contrary, she is capable of overpowering him and she repeatedly foils his efforts later to cause an abortion of her child (3: 378-9, 387-90). In addition, she hits him with her son's school ruler at a later time when he is much bigger and older, and perhaps even capable of retaliating with greater force since having apprenticed as a stonemason (3: 621). Thus, Maria seems to be physically superior to Oskar, and persists as a physical threat to his conception of himself as a superior man.

Oskar's sexual encounters with Maria are also indicative of how she might fit the mold of a female villain. Although Oskar claims to have witnessed and understood as a child the affairs and sexual encounters that his mother has with Jan Bronski and Grettchen Scheffler, he does not have a personal experience until he becomes sexually acquainted with Maria Truczinski in their changing room on the beach. However, this experience for Oskar cannot be considered one that serves to oppress woman. Instead, his inexperienced sensitivities are aroused by his observations of Maria disrobing and, as evidenced by his shock and dismay, his bodily functions respond unexpectedly for him according to their natural course. Oskar's rushed and confused description of the event corresponds with Maria's assessment of his behavior, for she exclaims: "Du best mir so

ain Schlingelchen! Jehst da ran und waißt nich, was is, und nachher weinste” (3: 349).

Her sexuality did stimulate Oskar’s behavior, but in this case, it did not contribute to her increased oppression because of Oskar’s age and size. Maria is only intrigued by the unusual and perhaps comical experience. In addition, Oskar’s use of the “Brausepulver” on Maria only illustrates instances when she benefits from Oskar’s endeavors. However, unlike Oskar’s exploitation of Lina Greff, Maria directs any sexual relationship that they might have, sometimes permitting or even encouraging Oskar to make sexual contact, and sometimes forbidding such contact (3: 349-65, 370-1). With Oskar, Maria tends to resist becoming a sex object, even uses him, and defies his will throughout the events related in the novel.

Maria even tends to resist some of society’s expectations for a woman in her position. Although she marries Alfred Matzerath after becoming pregnant, she does not marry again, even when she might have benefited financially from such a union. For instance, she refuses Herr Fajngold’s offer to care for her through marriage, and she also refuses a similar marriage proposal from Oskar (3: 548-9, 603). In addition, she is careful not to submit herself to any man’s power (following Alfred Matzerath’s death) through her dependence on his money or financial means. Of course, she often accepts and takes money and assistance when it is offered to her. Maria takes Oskar’s lavishly excessive payment for new clothes, and she readily accepts his offer to finance a business for her under the condition that she leave an admirer, Herr Stenzel (3: 589, 737). Indeed, the fact that Maria never commits herself more permanently to Herr Stenzel, and then so easily leaves him after accepting Oskars offer, indicates that she was likely using him, her “Arbeitgeber” and “verheirateter Verehrer,” to profit from their more intimate

relationship (3: 638, 673, 699, 711, 728, 737). Through her independence, intrepidity, and determination to prosper, she becomes a threat to her male counterpart's role as a superior figure.

Throughout the novel, Maria repeatedly causes Oskar emotional hurt and suffering. In his musings, Oskar once mentions weeping out of hate and love for Maria, and he describes the pain she has caused by refusing to marry him (3: 603, 379). Later, Maria shuns his request to acknowledge any remembrance of the "Brausepulver" days (3: 370-1). Richard H. Lawson also recognizes Maria's painful effect on Oskar, as evidenced in this brief synopsis and evaluation of some of their more discordant encounters:

Quite likely the greatest source of emotional involvement and unabashed suffering lies in Oskar's relationship with Maria. He is thrown into a violent if powerless fury when he finds his supposed father Alfred having sexual intercourse with her. His subsequent punching of Maria, as well as his inchoate attempt to stab her in the belly with a pair of scissors, are measures of the intensity of his emotional hurt. His suffering is hardly diminished by her sensible refusal of his later marriage proposal.²⁵

Although they generally maintain a cordial relationship throughout the novel, Maria has nevertheless demonstrated a physical superiority and independent spirit that has consistently caused Oskar emotional pain. She does not fear man's physical power over her, at least not Oskar's, and she uses her sexual role to her own advantage, either to obtain personal pleasure, as from Oskar, or to obtain greater prosperity and security, as

²⁵ Richard H. Lawson, *Günter Grass* (New York: F. Ungar Pub. Co., 1985) 35.

from Herr Stenzel. Maria Truczinski has learned how to use man to her own advantage, rather than allowing man to use her and keep her in submission. Moreover, she acts the part of a villain because of her culpability in causing Oskar emotional pain and suffering.

In combination with Luzie Rennwand, Susi Kater might be one of the figures developed in anticipation of the villain who emerges in later works, Tulla Pokriefke.²⁶ Although Susi Kater makes only a few brief appearances in the novel, her role is sufficient to allow a reader to draw conclusions about her sinister personality as a participant and leader in a gang responsible for persecuting Oskar Matzerath as a child. She does not possess any particular superior strength that sets her apart from her male counterparts, but she does seem to be more ferocious and aggressive. In the gang of kids in Oskar's neighborhood, she is the only girl, yet she still seems to dominate and manipulate their actions.

During his first encounter with the group, Oskar describes Susi's reaction to the addition of live frogs to their soupy concoction: "Susi Kater, das einzige Mädchen in dem Zelt, zeigte sich um den Mund herum enttäuscht und bitter, als die Frösche so sang- und klanglos, auch ohne jeden letzten Sprungversuch in der Suppe untergingen" (3: 122). Apparently, she is disappointed that the frogs do not die in a more excruciating manner. Her callous wish for sadistic entertainment through viewing the torment and death of helpless victims (the frogs) mirrors the attitudes of SS soldiers when confronting analogous situations in their efforts to exterminate the Jews.²⁷ Thus associated with

²⁶ Neuhaus 181.

²⁷ For a treatise on cruelty in the annihilation of Jews, see Daniel J. Goldhagen, "Hitler's Willing Executioners," *The Holocaust* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2003) 91-103.

human exterminators, the reader can more vividly imagine Susi's pernicious personality as one of the female villains in this work. She is the culprit who calls attention to Oskar's flight, and she is the member of the gang who carefully spoons the gruel into Oskar's mouth. In sum, Susi Kater is responsible for Oskar's failed attempt to escape and for forcing him to partake of the horrid concoction.

In a later encounter with Susi and the gang, Oskar speaks of a game, "Arzt und Patient," which they have been playing in the basement. Once again forced into participating, he is made the patient, and Susi, as the doctor, forces him to partake once again of their concocted medications, "die nicht so sandig wie die Ziegelsteinsuppe waren, aber den Nachgeschmack schlechter Fische hatten" (3: 161). In particular, Oskar mentions that the "Arzt und Patient" game holds a special appeal to the boys of the group, who spend considerable time in the basement with Susi Kater. Referring repeatedly to his immunity to this "Versuchung," Oskar thus implies that some sexually-related activity is drawing the neighborhood boys and Susi Kater together. Although Oskar's description of the game is vague, mentioning only the boys as "Serumspender" and Susi as the accompanying (and provocative) "Ärztin," it nevertheless suggests that the teenagers are now engaging in sexual contact or even intercourse,²⁸ with Susi as the temptress and seducer. According to Oskar's account, Susi is the aggressive persecutor and temptress, responsible for Oskar's suffering and the sexual experiences of the other boys. As a threat to Oskar's safety and security, she does not rank among the average females of this novel.

²⁸ John Reddick corroborates my suspicions of Susi's sex games with the boys in *The 'Danzig Trilogy' of Günter Grass: A Study of The Tin Drum, Cat and Mouse, and Dog Years* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1975) 39. See also Alan F. Keele, *Understanding Günter Grass* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1988) 19.

Luzie Rennwand materializes in the text as an additional female villain who possesses a menacing influence on other figures. From the beginning of his acquaintance with her, Oskar insists that her presence portends an unfortunate future for his “Stäuber” gang (3: 494). Perhaps Oskar’s premonitions are accurate since he is reporting these experiences from hindsight; the text suggests that Luzie ultimately causes the gang’s ruin. As the gang endeavors to remove a statute of the Christ child from the Herz-Jesu-Kirche, word of someone’s approach causes tremendous concern: “Als schließlich, wie wir alle erwarteten, das Wörtchen Luzie fiel, stellte Störtebeker keine Fragen mehr, riß Löwenherz die Metallsäge aus den ungeschickten Händen und gab wild verbissen arbeitend dem Jesusknaben den Rest” (3: 496). The mere mention of her name prompts tremendous trepidation among all members of the group, because it seems to signify the coming of something unpleasant. In addition, all members of the group have anticipated what the reader discovers is her betrayal of the group to the police (3: 496, 500). Through the perfidious betrayal of her boyfriend’s Duster gang, Luzie demonstrates that she cannot be trusted, that she is not subservient to any individual or entity, and that she is a threat to man’s authority.

Though she experiences a beating similar to that commonly suffered by Ulla the muse at the hands of Lankes, Luzie Rennwand reacts quite differently. When Ulla receives a beating, she cries and submits to her abuser’s demands (3: 618, 712). Indeed, Störtebeker pounds Luzie’s face with his fists for a few moments until a policeman finally throws him off of her (3: 500). However, although Oskar observes her “brennendes, geschlagenes” face that is “wie gehämmert,” he does not notice any tears, sobs, or snivels (3: 501). Instead of a weeping, heartbroken demeanor, Oskar claims to

see her smiling and gorging on “Wurstbrote” (3: 501). Luzie does not appear penitent or disturbed by what she has done. In reality, she has disappointed her boyfriend to the extent that he has resorted to beating her to express his disapproval. Yet even in beating her, Störtebeker fails to inspire in Luzie any feelings of regret or contrition, because she is satisfied with her actions in ruining his gang.

Luzie’s self-satisfied attitude following her treachery has impressed Oskar so much that his observations of her role during the resulting court proceedings are tinged with imagined descriptions of her participation as an opposing witness. Since the evening of her betrayal in the Herz-Jesu-Kirche, her triangular face, associated with the pubic triangle,²⁹ permeates Oskar’s thoughts and seems to haunt him (3: 501-507). Though her face so closely resembles the pubic triangle of the female genitalia, Luzie plays a role that is not associated with the motherly ideals of reproduction and nurturing, rather, she seems more closely connected with death and persecution.

At the trial proceedings, Oskar imagines that she uses her sexual abilities to seduce his cohorts into confessing their misdeeds. With her prominent, “pubic” face, she commands her victims to leap from the diving board into an empty swimming pool, symbolizing the risk that a confession might result in a punishment leading to their death. The reader learns that Moorkähne is among those who “leaps” and dies as a result (3: 503-4; 6: 213). When Oskar takes his turn on the diving board, he resists the most seductive of Luzie’s advances: “‘Spring, süßer Jesus, spring,’ flüsterte die frühreife Zeugin Luzie Rennwand. Sie saß auf Satans Schoß, was ihre Jungfräulichkeit noch

²⁹ Keele 35.

betonte. Er bereitete ihr Lust, indem er ihr ein Wurstbrot reichte. Sie biß zu und blieb dennoch keusch. ‘Spring, süßer Jesus!’ kaute sie und bot mir ihr unverletztes Dreieck” (3: 506). Associating himself with the most holy and pure of society’s influential figures, Oskar imagines that his adversary, Luzie Rennwand, is conspiring with the Devil, and that she is trying to convince him to fall. Moreover, she tries to coerce his demise by tempting him with her sexuality. She is at least successful with some of his comrades.

After this experience with Luzie Rennwand, she continues to inspire him with fear and dread throughout the remainder of his life. The memory of Luzie haunts Oskar repeatedly in nightmares or on other random occasions. Following Frau Truczinski’s death, for instance, Oskar searches for her lifeless body among the many corpses hanging from the trees in the city (3: 511). He then claims to ride with her in the same refugee train car to Germany, while he is undergoing a painful and traumatic growth spurt and simultaneously recovering from an illness (3: 553, 559, 560, 561). As a stonemason for Korneff, he imagines her face, body and how he discovers his name engraved in her heart as if it were thus engraved on his own gravestone (3: 584). He visualizes her once again while playing his tin drum for the first time in years (3: 668). Luzie has become a regular part of Oskar’s recurring memories. As Reddick suggests, Luzie is originally a “prototype of the Schwarze Köchin,” who is associated with the fear of confronting one’s guilt.³⁰ Oskar speaks of Luzie in connection with the Schwarze Köchin in the final chapter of his autobiography, just as he is about to turn himself in to the authorities for an alleged crime, and he speaks of the two figures a few years later when reflecting back on his

³⁰ Reddick 35.

experience on the trial with the Duster gang (3: 778, 507). In fact, Oskar more explicitly associates Luzie Rennwand with the Schwarze Köchin, who is the source of his fears as a catalyst for guilt and shame³¹: “Mein Entsetzen heißt dann: Jetzt kommt Luzie Rennwand und fordert dich als Kinderschreck und Schwarze Köchin letztmals zum Sprung auf” (3: 507). As the other members of the gang yield to her enticings, they plunge symbolically from a diving board onto a dry swimming pool floor. Although Luzie has performed her legal duty in extracting their guilt, she is also responsible for their probable deaths since they will likely be sentenced to perform hazardous tasks as soldiers on the front.

Through her role as a treacherous, deadly, young teenager, Luzie Rennwand transcends the handicaps that nature and society might have required of her. She does not fear man’s ability to abuse her, and she even persists with her plans in spite of any abuse. She also uses her sexuality as a tool to seduce others into submitting to her will. Finally, she haunts Oskar’s dreams and imagination, inspiring fear in him where he might not have otherwise found fear (3: 553-62, 584-5, 767-8). Luzie and the other female villains previously discussed, Susi Kater and Maria Truczinski, have surpassed the confines of nature and society which bind other women. In doing so, they have also demonstrated differing levels of threat towards man’s security and safety, sometimes influencing him to act in a certain way, sometimes causing him fear or suffering, and sometimes causing his ruin.

Though one is an inanimate object and the other an imaginary spook, the remaining two villains of the text, Niobe and the Schwarze Köchin, also invoke very

³¹ A short time after the trial, Oskar wonders if Luzie Rennwand is among those hanged on the trees on the Hindenburgallee, symbolically suggesting that Germany has attempted to eliminate any cause for guilt or shame (3: 511).

tangible and unpleasant consequences on their victims. Niobe was originally created as a ship's figurehead, but because of the violent myth connected with her, she is now part of an exhibit at a museum. Her appearance is almost erotic, and also ominous: "Ein üppig hölzernes, grün nacktes Weib, das unter erhobenen Armen, die sich lässig und alle Finger zeigend verschränkten, über zielstrebigen Brüsten hinweg aus eingelassenen Bernsteinaugen geradeaussah" (3: 240). She is voluptuous, but her amber eyes and green color give her a creepy, eerie aura, especially when the sun shining into her eyes causes them to sparkle like flames. And Oskar reminds the reader of her history: "Dieses Weib, die Galionsfigur, brachte Unglück"(3: 240). Because of her close association with tragedy after tragedy, including the burning and destruction of several ships and numerous unexplained deaths, she has acquired a portentous reputation as the object responsible for all of these events. Oskar further implies that men are the most frequent victims: "Niobe wurde ernsthaft verdächtigt, Männer und Knaben vom Leben zum Tode befördert zu haben" (3: 243). From such imagery, Alan Keele argues that Niobe is symbolically the "very incarnation of war, that man-and-boy killing evil par excellence."³²

In Oskar's account, Herbert Truczinski becomes her most recent victim. In fact, his manner of death indicates that he is drawn to her sexually, and only achieves union with her through a double-edged axe (3: 251). Thus far in *Die Blechtrommel*, Niobe is the most lethal of all villains. Maria Truczinski has only caused Oskar emotional pain and suffering. Susi assumes a position of authority in a gang, which victimizes Oskar at least

³² Keele 28.

twice, but not fatally. Luzie Rennwand also causes the ruin of Oskar's gang and torments him psychologically, but she is not responsible for his death, in spite of her symbolic associations with death.³³ But Niobe's lack of animation and sentience does not hinder her supernatural ability to target mostly male victims, seduce them, and then inspire their brutal demise.

Compared to Niobe, the Schwarze Köchin's influence is not as severe, though she does constitute a threat to man's self-assurance of his infallible position. Nevertheless, as Henri Plard points out, Niobe, Luzie Rennwand, and the Schwarze Köchin derive from a common, fundamental character model: "Selon moi, la belle et meurtrière figure de proue est l'une des incarnations de la Cuisinière noire, comme Luzie Rennwand, plus tard."³⁴ In addition to their roles as threats to man's status, these figures serve to conjure in man feelings of guilt. Luzie successfully convinces the members of the Duster gang to plead guilty for their crimes. Niobe's role as a perpetrator of death and destruction often seems prompted by occurrences of injustice or excessive greed, as when the maid, from which Niobe's wooden figure is modeled, is executed according to charges of witchcraft. Each subsequent slaying by Niobe thus seems to serve as an act of vengeance (3: 240).

Originally part of a children's game, the Schwarze Köchin is similarly associated with guilt:

The child's song-game "Die schwarze Köchin" begins innocently enough,

³³ While working as a stonemason's assistant, Oskar has a vision of Luzie Rennwand's bleeding heart, shaped like a gravestone, with the following engraving: "" (3: 584-5).

³⁴ "In my opinion, the beautiful and murderous figurehead is, like Luzie Rennwand, one of the incarnations of the later Schwarze Köchin," Henri Plard, "Une source du chapitre 'Niobe' dans 'Die Blechtrommel' de Grass," *Etudes Germanique* 39 (1984): 284.

but to an adult it ends with horror and frustration and shame: horror at one's predicament, frustration at being found guilty in spite of innocence, and shame at being pointed at by the finger of blame. Outside a circle of children one child marches, singing the song. One by one he chooses a child from the circle to march and sing with him, forming gradually a second circle embracing the first. When finally a single child is left within the new circle he puts his hands before his face in pretended shame while the others hop around him singing "Pfui, pfui, pfui!" The black witch, then, is an object of derision, unmasked and shamefully exposed.

Implications of guilt are obvious...³⁵

Later in the tale, Oskar recounts his ability to summon the Schwarze Köchin (manifestations of guilt and shame) in post-war Germany, first in the Zwiebelkeller, and later while on tour (3: 704, 734). While fleeing from the authorities, Oskar confides that he fears this imaginary and abstract female spook: "Ich habe mich mein Lebtag nicht vor der Schwarzen Köchin gefürchtet. Erst auf der Flucht, da ich mich fürchten wollte, kroch sie mir unter die Haut" (3: 769). Like other Germans of that time period, Oskar fears being accused and being found guilty of crimes he has committed. And he fears the shame that accompanies such guilt.

Certainly, the Schwarze Köchin does not conform to those natural and societal restrictions that confine other women. She is abstract and imaginary, less tangible than even Niobe. Nevertheless, her imagined form is conceived of as female, and as such, she

³⁵ Leslie A. Willson, "The Grotesque Everyman in Grass's 'Die Blechtrommel'" *Monatshefte* 58 (1966): 132.

does not fit the mold of the typical woman as delineated by Beauvoir. As more of an imaginary phantom, the Schwarze Köchin is not bound by those restrictions known to confine and oppress woman. Like the other female villains in *Die Blechtrommel*, the Schwarze Köchin challenges man's status, and even subjugates him; for Oskar and his audiences yield to the experience of the Schwarze Köchin and learn to confront their guilt and shame. While the more threatening figures, Niobe and Luzie Rennwand, engender ruin and death, all of these villains produce suffering and fear. Moreover, all five figures function as forerunners of Tulla Pokriefke, the villain of *Katz und Maus*, *Hundejahre*, and *Im Krebsgang*.

Chapter 2: Tulla Pokriefke in *Katz und Maus*

The female villain in *Katz und Maus* is Tulla Pokriefke, whose behavior and attributes differ greatly from those of other female figures in the work. In spite of their brief appearances in this work, the resulting portrayals of these normal women will suffice to demonstrate that they conform to Beauvoir's model, though not in every respect. For instance, because the narrator does not discuss their fertility or roles as wives, it is impractical to speculate about how they respond to the natural handicap of pregnancy or the societal convention of marriage. Nevertheless, the narrator does supply adequate details to allow for an analysis of the implications of their physical inferiority and subordination to male authority. As discussion of the brief portrayals of other female figures will illustrate how they conform to the natural handicaps and societal restrictions that enforce the subordination of woman as the "second sex," while Tulla, on the other hand, transcends these handicaps and cultural restrictions, and threatens man's authority.

In this short novella, Pilenz discusses his cousins through an account of an outing with them and Schilling to the sunken minesweeper, where they have an inconvenient encounter with Mahlke. Throughout this account, the role of physical strength does not seem to be an important factor in compelling the cousins to depend on Pilenz, Schilling, or Mahlke. Although Pilenz and Schilling do help the girls board the ship, the outing does not otherwise require physical strength. The girls can come and go as they choose, especially since they were capable of the jaunt to the sunken minesweeper because of the iced-over sea. While the cousins' physical inferiority does not cause them any

disadvantage, the narrator treats them as sexual objects, and his description of their association with Mahlke provides evidence of their submission to authority.

The cousins from Berlin are “hübsch glatt blond kraus” (4: 50). Not only are they very attractive, Pilenz even suggests that he and Schilling were hoping to become more intimately acquainted with them: “Auch hofften wir, mit den Dingern, die in der Straßenbahn und am Strand geniert getan hatten, auf dem Kahn irgend etwas Dolles, wir wußten noch nicht was, anstellen zu können” (4: 50). Apparently, this “etwas Dolles” is not a reference to kissing and smooching, because Pilenz laments a few pages later that they missed their chance for it, even though they had done the usual “Knutchereien” in the movie theater (4: 55). Further, the narrator does not provide the reader with any of the girls’ individual characteristics or personalities, other than the implication that they possess feminine and sexually capable organs, which the boys are not permitted to view: “Aber ihr müßt weggucken” (4: 53). For Pilenz, these figures with flat, undeveloped personalities are objects, or “Dinger” (4: 50, 52), which have one main use for him and his friend: “Etwas Dolles.” Regardless of whether it is his intent to illustrate Mahlke’s lack of interest in two luscious blonds from Berlin (4: 43), or to provide evidence of Mahlke’s ability to impress and entertain, Pilenz’s account illustrates his sexually objectifying attitude towards these two women.

The account further illustrates how the cousins submit to patriarchal authority in the form of Joachim Mahlke. The narrator relates how the cousins are very polite to Mahlke, regard him as an authority figure, and even use the polite pronoun “Sie” when speaking to him (4: 52). They are very eager to help when he politely demands it: “Au ja!” (4: 53). Something about Mahlke’s character or behavior impresses the girls and

inspires their respect for him and acquiescence to his request. The narrator recalls feeling like a little boy with a runny nose when next to Mahlke, and it is perhaps this lack of mature virility that provokes the girls to treat both Pilenz and Schilling with less respect on the return trip (4: 52-53). The girls do not respect Pilenz and Schilling as much as they admire and submit to Mahlke, who has established his superior sexuality and physiology on past occasions (4: 10-11, 40-2, 70-1). Indeed, the narrator seems to envy his friend's impression over the cousins, and even becomes frustrated, blaming Mahlke for his lack of success with them: "Mahlke verpatzte uns den Nachmittag" (4: 50). Their roles of the cousins from Berlin thus illustrate how a woman might not necessarily submit to all men, especially to male children or immature adolescents, but how she at least submits to the most superior and masculine of them.

Besides the two cousins from Berlin or Tulla Pokriefke, few female figures in this work earn more than a few passing comments from the narrator. Pilenz mentions Mahlke's mother and aunt on a few occasions. From him, we may deduce that the mother and aunt are not currently married, and that they held Mahlke back a year in school because they were concerned about his sickly health at the time (4: 28). Further, one learns of Mahlke's abundant "Taschengeld" (4: 11). Apparently, the mother is not neglecting her parental responsibilities in caring for her son's needs, perhaps even spoiling him with the extra money. Perhaps, Beauvoir would see in the mother's concern and care for her child a sign of her yielding to one of nature's handicaps, the role of mother and procreator. The reader also learns that the father is no longer living and that Mahlke is a half-orphan, indicating that his mother and father were likely married (4: 12). Her past marriage suggests her compliance with society's conventions restricting

woman's freedom and ensuring her dependence on man. Nevertheless, these comments about the mother's and aunt's roles as women are inconclusive because of the paucity of information offered about them.

Only one situation clearly demonstrates how both of these women submit to a man's authority. This situation takes place when Pilenz visits Mahlke and his mother and aunt in their home. During the conversation, it becomes apparent that Mahlke is now the dominant, authoritative figure in the household. For example, he corrects their erroneous assertions (4: 123), and they are impressed by his informed and knowledgeable rhetoric about the future significance of aircraft carriers and rapid-response units (4: 124). In addition, he commands their respect and compliance, especially when he reminds them of his father: "Beide Frauen gehorchten ihm oder jenem verstorbenen Lokomotivführer, den er unaufdringlich beschwor und Stille gebieten ließ, sobald Tante wie Mutter schwatzhaft wurden" (4: 123). Like the two cousins from Berlin, the mother and aunt admire Mahlke for his achievements, and they respect him and submit to his demands. In this way, they too conform to Beauvoir's portrait of the subjugated "second sex."

The only other female figure of significance besides Tulla is the Virgin Mary, who takes on a role of symbolic significance in the novella. As the complete opposite of the female villain, she is admired and worshipped as a goddess. Mahlke exhibits a zealous devotion to her, regularly attending worship services on her behalf and wearing a silver medallion portrait of her on a necklace³⁶ (4: 21-2, 43). "Das einzige, an die ich glaube," insists Mahlke, "ist die Jungfrau Maria. Deshalb werde ich auch nicht heiraten"

³⁶ This kind of fanatic devotion is ironically similar to Harry Liebenau's infatuation with Tulla in *Hundejahre*, because he also seems to worship her, follows her around, and keeps a piece of *Knochenleim* in his pocket to remind him of her. I will discuss his relationship with Tulla in more detail in chapter four.

(4: 157). According to Mahlke's beliefs, God does not exist, only the Madonna (4: 157). By asserting his belief in the Madonna and denying his belief in God, Mahlke thereby promotes her position over that of God, who does not exist for him. Normally, the Madonna is worshipped for her virgin parturition of the Messiah (also considered God, the Father), and for her role as a mediator between God and man. But Mahlke's belief advances her to a position of symbolic autonomy and independence; God does not exist, so she does not need to serve as a mediator. Like the female villain, Mahlke's Virgin Mary does not conform to societal conventions, nor must she suffer from the handicaps of nature. Nevertheless, Beauvoir maintains that such female deities are not subject to the jurisdiction of human conventions: "Terre, Mère, Déesse, elle n'était pas pour l'homme une semblable; c'est *au delà* du règne humain que sa puissance s'affirmait: elle était donc *hors de ce règne*."³⁷ Unlike the female villain, a goddess is worshipped and platonically loved (as by Mahlke), for her attributes and qualities that are not compatible with a patriarchal society. With the exception of Mahlke's Madonna, the female figures in *Katz und Maus* tend to be at the mercy of nature's demands as sexual objects or subjugated by the demands of a patriarchal society.

On the other hand, as Tulla's example will confirm, the female villain suffers spite and revilement for resisting the demands of nature and of a patriarchal society. Her role is comparable to that of a goddess, insofar as both seem to exist and act independently of human expectations. However, the villain also differs from the goddess, because her position is confined relative to the requirements of nature and societal

³⁷ Beauvoir 1: 119; "Earth, Mother, Goddess — she was no fellow creature in man's eyes; it was *beyond* the human realm that her power was affirmed, and she was therefore *outside* of that realm." 70.

tradition, and not confirmed by a believer's faith. The female villain's physical characteristics, including her strength, her sexual appeal, and her fertility or reproductive role, tend to resist those requirements or handicaps dictated by nature. As a result, she seems to be more independent than other girls or women, and she poses as a threat to man's status in some respects.

Physically, Tulla Pokriefke is smaller, thinner, and weaker, consisting mainly of "Haut, Knochen und Neugierde" (4: 38). Referred to as "das zerbrechliche Ding," and "das spirrige [sic] Ding," she is frail and skinny, lacking the equivalent physical power and muscular strength that the boys might have had (4: 38, 97, 102).³⁸ Even as an adolescent, Tulla remains "knochig" and "klein" (4: 100, 158, 161). However, she possesses other abilities that set her apart as somehow equal or superior to her male peers. For instance, though she is very fragile, Pilenz is nonetheless impressed by her ability to swim the great distance to the sunken ship: "Eigentlich hätte sie Schwimmhäute zwischen den Zehen haben müssen, so leicht lag sie im Wasser" (4: 38). As mentioned in my introduction, Volker Neuhaus compares Tulla with the "Nixen und Halbnixen" of other texts, and especially with Mörike's Lau.³⁹ Tulla does not seem to be a normal female. Indeed, Pilenz does not mention any other girls swimming out to the sunken minesweeper. In spite of her inferior physical strength, Tulla possesses an ability to float on the water and is capable of keeping up with the boys for the difficult forty-five minute swim to the minesweeper.

³⁸ However, Noel L. Thomas describes her as a "somewhat masculine girl." Noel L. Thomas, *Grass: Katz und Maus* (Somerset: Castle Cary Press, 1992) 32.

³⁹ Neuhaus 187.

Notwithstanding Tulla's fragile and delicate physique, she refuses to allow other boys to exercise power over her. This differs considerably from Ulla the Muse in *Die Blechtrommel*, who surrenders to each of Lankes' demands when confronted with the threat (or reality) of a beating (3: 618, 712). In *Katz und Maus*, Tulla, whose name sounds remarkably like Ulla's, is much different. When confronted with brute force that is intended to compel her submission, she resists, and persists in demanding her will. Such an event takes place on the minesweeper, when she insists that Mahlke also demonstrate his phallic prowess, as the other boys have done. Noel L. Thomas considers Tulla's seduction of Mahlke a first blow in a battle to gain control in a temptation scene: "She obviously strikes at Mahlke's weak spot."⁴⁰ Believing that he can discourage her from petitioning him further, he "trat halb aus dem Schatten und wischte Tulla links rechts mit Handfläche und Handrücken das kleine und gedrängt gezeichnete Gesicht" (4: 40). Pilenz relates Tulla's reaction to Mahlke's strikes thus.

Tulla weinte natürlich keinen Tropfen, lachte meckernd mit geschlossenem Mund, kugelte sich vor ihm, verdrehte ihre Gummiglieder und guckte aus mühelos geschlagener Brücke zwischen Strichbeinen hindurch solange in Richtung Mahlke, bis der, schon wieder im Schatten — und der Schlepper drehte nach Nordwest ab — "Na schön" sagte. "Damit du endlich die Schnauze hältst." (4: 40)

She succeeds in commanding his compliance, because she refuses to let his abuse intimidate her into submission. Tulla is subject to a physical handicap of fragility, which

⁴⁰ Noel L. Thomas, "An Analysis of Günter Grass' *Katz und Maus*," *German Life and Letters* 26 (1972-3): 232.

might normally subjugate other women (like Ulla the Muse in *Blechtrommel*) to man's domination; however, she overcomes this handicap and demonstrates her ability to overcome the oppression suffered by other members of the "weaker sex."

Tulla's occasional outings with the boys to the minesweeper, in addition to her involvement with Störtebeker and boys in other groups, seem to suggest that she does not discriminate between genders in selecting her associates. In fact, the sparse details of her activities in this novella suggest that she associates only rarely with other girls.⁴¹ According to the narrator's account, Tulla is always with one or more boys. She is the only girl with the boys on the minesweeper, and she is with Hotten Sonntag and other boys on other occasions. As the narrator claims, "ins Kino ging sie mit jedem," and she is the one, who "ziemlich jeden ranließ" (4: 111, 131). Perhaps the only occasion when she is not mentioned as being with one or more boys is when Pilenz thinks he sees her while she is on duty on *Linie 2* or *5* the night that Mahlke deserts. The boys seem drawn to Tulla, either because of her physical attributes or because of some mystical power of appeal that she has over them.

At first, the boys in *Katz und Maus* are not drawn to any physically alluring characteristics that Tulla might have. Unlike Pilenz's blond cousins from Berlin, Tulla is not attractive. Consisting mainly of skin and bones, she is bereft of the typical female voluptuousness that the boys find charming in other women (4: 38). As a girl, Tulla resembles a "Spirkel mit Strichbeinen," and she "hätte genausogut ein Junge sein können" (4: 38). Besides her unprepossessing and androgynous figure, her face is more

⁴¹ Harry Liebenau reports in *Hundejahre* that Tulla has a relationship with Jenny Brunies, which will be discussed in the following chapter.

remarkable for its imperfections than for any lovely features; the boys remember most clearly her “Stülplippe und immer sichtbare Schneidezähne,” and her “kleine[s] und gedrängt gezeichnete[s] Gesicht” (4: 44, 40). The boys do not seem to notice anything further about her that might interest them, such as her sexual attributes, because they consider her a sexually immature and “unfertiges Ding” (4: 43). At this younger age, her face and figure do not offer any sexual allurements for her male companions, who insist that her promises of sex as a reward for recovering the alleged corpse in the minesweeper are no temptation (4: 43). As a young girl, she cannot yet occupy the role of a sexual object like the cousins from Berlin, because the boys recognize neither her sexual potential nor any seductive attributes about her.

As Tulla grows older, however, she does acquire the bare and fundamental sexual allurements. No longer afflicted by the androgyny of her younger years, she is no longer “überall platt,” and has long hair (4: 97). Though still referred to as a “spirrige[s] Ding,” Tulla’s body has filled out slightly in her teenage years so that her “bißchen Brust” is now visible (4: 97, 99). Not even the boys can deny that she possesses the requisite feminine attributes for sex, which are hardly concealed by her deteriorating swimming suit (99). Physically and symbolically, Tulla appears to fulfill all of the requirements necessary to occupy the position of a sexual object for man. Eventually, we learn that she gladly submits to this role, first pairing with Hotten Sonntag and then with others, with the added implication that she is very promiscuous (4: 131). According to one Grass critic, her unpleasant characteristics ultimately do little to hinder her in her sexual and seductive role: “Despite her ‘Tischlerleimgeruch,’ her scrawny figure and her faded

clothes, she is a symbol of sexuality and temptation.”⁴² Tulla Pokriefke becomes undeniably a sexual object for her male peers, in spite of her unattractive features.

Although Tulla does not resist submitting to the role of a sex object, she becomes a villain precisely because she uses her status as a sex object to her advantage in advancing her own objectives. On the minesweeper, the still innubile Tulla persuades each of the boys, including Mahlke, to display their sexual prowess. According to Richard H. Lawson, she is their “female mascot,” implying that she brings them luck and success in the “onanistic ‘Olympiad,’” which she herself has incited.⁴³ Later, Tulla does not merely tempt her male peers with her loose behavior; rather, she seduces them and sleeps with as many as she chooses (4: 131). In *Hundejahre*, we learn that she submits to this position because she wants a baby (5: 336). Contrary to the average woman’s position spoken of by Beauvoir, Tulla does not submit to man’s embrace or to his authority because she is subservient. Instead, Tulla endeavors to seduce as many as will take her, all in an effort to conceive and have a baby. Tulla contravenes society’s requirement for chastity and monogamous relationships by assuming the more masculine (though still unacceptable) role of philanderer. According to Beauvoir, the role of philanderer or polygamist was historically more permissible for man.⁴⁴ Society would prefer to give woman the more pejorative title of slut or whore. Thus, Tulla’s zealotry

⁴² G. Bauer Pickar, “Intentional Ambiguity in Günter Grass’ ‘Katz und Maus,’” *Orbis Litterarum* 26 (1971): 244.

⁴³ Richard H. Lawson, *Günter Grass* (New York: F. Ungar Pub. Co., 1985) 50. Interestingly, Lawson uses the same term for Oskar Matzerath of *Die Blechtrommel* (27). As mascots of their respective groups, both Oskar and Tulla exercise influence and control over others, even motivating group members to commit crimes and socially unacceptable acts.

⁴⁴ Beauvoir 2: 197; 427.

in trying to conceive a child outside of marriage, and her success in seducing random partners challenges the moral standards of society and contributes to her reputation as a villain.

Tulla also assumes the role of a villain because of her inability to submit to patriarchal authority. In her sexual exploits and relationships with other boys, Tulla is in control. On the sunken minesweeper, she succeeds in persuading all of the boys to masturbate and then to look for the corpse of seaman (4: 38-43). Once she decides she wants a baby, her efforts to conceive naturally involve other boys, the first of which likely included Hotten Sonntag (4: 99). In fact, Pilenz suggests that Hotten Sonntag is reluctant to speak with Mahlke (about pilfering the Iron Cross from the soldier), because of his desire for sexual contact with Tulla: “Der wollte lieber mit Tulla Pokriefke hinter der Sonnenwand des Familienbades liegen und Seesand auf Froschschenkel streuen” (99). Her role as a sex object and temptress allows her to manipulate him. When she is finished with him, she discards him and chooses another (4: 111). Although she does not possess perfect control over all of her mates (as with Störtebeker), she manages to use her sexual nature to attract and maintain a certain hold over others. Pilenz confesses that he is drawn to her, as is her cousin, Harry Liebenau (4: 111). Mahlke even seems to like her, and maintains that he does not wish to return to military service because of her (4: 161). Perhaps her “Tischlerleimgeruch” has some magical, venereal property, or her smell has become symbolic of her independence from others and their dependence on her. Indeed, her control over male figures contributes to her reputation as a female villain.

Because Tulla does not conform to the role that society has stipulated for woman, she is more likely to encounter the contempt and ridicule of others who view her as

different or regard her as a challenge to male superiority. The first signs of general antipathy for her first take place on the minesweeper. The narrator reports that Tulla “ging uns, obgleich sie patenter war als andere Mädchen ihres Alters, mit ewigem Gequatsche vom toten Mariner im Kahn mehr und mehr auf die Nerven” (4: 42). In spite of her annoying persistence, he relates how he and the boys give in to her pressure and search for the dead seaman anyway. Her vexatious power of persuasion disturbs the narrator later on in the account, when Tulla almost ruins his opportunity to deal with Mahlke in private (after he takes the Iron Cross medal). On this occasion, the narrator is especially upset with Tulla, for he describes her as “kleiner verrückter schmerzhafter,” and opines that “uns allen saß Tulla als Splitter im Fleisch” (4: 100). This caustic censure of her character corresponds with what Beauvoir claims is the typical consequence of woman’s transcendence above biological and historical restrictions.⁴⁵ Once man discovers woman’s encroachment on his position or success, he begins to search for ways to vilify her and bring attention to her imperfections. Pilenz criticizes Tulla’s character because she is difficult to control and because she, on the other hand, has demonstrated an ability to manipulate him and his friends.

In *Katz und Maus*, one of the most apparent means implemented by the narrator to illustrate Tulla’s inferior nature is his continual comparison of Tulla with animals, particularly rodents, shrews, and dogs. Beginning with his initial descriptions of her, Pilenz describes Tulla’s physical attributes and behavior either by using language that refers to animals or by subtly suggesting a connection with an animal. For instance, Tulla

⁴⁵ Beauvoir 27; xxvi.

makes "enge Rattenaugen," which are part of "das kleine und gedrängt gezeichnete Gesicht," or "Schnauze" (4: 38, 40). In addition, the narrator insists that Tulla has "eine Stülplippe und immer sichtbare Schneidezähne" (4: 44). From these descriptions, Tulla's face resembles the small, pointed snout of some sort of animal, complete with incisors. Such descriptions of her face are not coincidental, because the narrator continues to compare her physical features and behavior with that of animals.

The color associated with her appearance also suggests a connection with rodents or shrews. The narrator occasionally associates Tulla's small and insubstantial figure with the color gray, a common color for rodents, shrews, and other animals. For instance, after diving with Mahlke in the minesweeper, he returns her to the surface "graugelb im Griff" (4: 42). On this occasion, Tulla's very skin is grayish in appearance, while later on in the novella, the narrator refers to her "mausgraue[...] Wolle" and "mausgraue[n]... Kinderbadeanzug" (4: 100, 99). Twice, the narrator refers to a mouse in describing the type of gray color of Tulla's clothing. In addition to the grayish color associated with her, Pilenz calls attention at least three times to her fingers and toes, all the while implying that these characteristics are comparable to those of an animal's. He first mentions how she might have had "Schwimmhäute zwischen den Zehen" (4: 38) because of her ability to swim, much like a water shrew. Her "gespreizte[...] Zehen" and slender fingers also remind one of the extendable digits of a rodent or shrew, particularly when such an animal is feeling threatened and exhibits its extended claws (4: 39-40, 99).

The narrator's depiction of Tulla Pokriefke's behavior also seems to suggest that her mannerisms and actions compare with those of animals. First, the way Tulla speaks and communicates adds to her brutish and bestial character. When speaking to other

characters, she begs them (*bettelt*) like dog, yaps (*mault*) at them, and laughs gripingly (*lacht meckernd*) at them like a goat (4: 38-40). Later on, the narrator describes one of Tulla's fits of fury on the pier when he is denied permission to accompany Pilenz out to the sunken minesweeper: "Sie schimpfte mit krauser Nase und gespreizten Zehen" (4: 99). This image is reminiscent of a dog or some other animal, raising its hackles, spreading its paws, and snarling through its nostrils.

Describing Tulla's encounter with Mahlke on the minesweeper, the narrator seems to compare Tulla with a snake. After receiving Mahlke's blows, Tulla "kugelte sich vor ihm, verdrehte ihre Gummiglieder und guckte aus mühelos geschlagener Brücke zwischen Strichbeinen hindurch" (4: 40). Referring to Tulla's behavior in this scene, Erhard M. Friedrichsmeyer suggests that Tulla is "a strange mixture of serpent and Eve."⁴⁶ Evoking the temptation scene in the Garden of Eden, he thus compares her with both Eve and Satan in the form of a serpent. According to the narrator, Tulla thus comports herself like an animal and possesses characteristics comparable to those of animals. Throughout his account, the narrator consistently bestializes Tulla by comparing her physical features and behavior with those of animals; because of the narrator's apparent prejudice caused by his view of Tulla as a threat to man's position, Tulla has become a dehumanized villain.

The figures in the novella attempt to vitiate Tulla's character further by implying her responsibility and guilt for their failures or troubles. Her role as a scapegoat appears especially in the narrator's psychological investigation of Mahlke's sexual drive, which

⁴⁶ Erhard M. Friedrichsmeyer, "Aspects of Myth, Parody and Obscenity in Grass' 'Die Blechtrommel' and 'Katz und Maus,'" *The Germanic Review* 40 (1965): 246.

centers on the Madonna and Tulla Pokriefke. Karl Ruhleder contends that Mahlke is sexually infatuated with the Virgin, who supersedes even his interest in other women.⁴⁷ Pilenz' account even seems to suggest that he does not even find other women sexually attractive: "Sonst war mit Mädchen nicht viel bei ihm los. Hätte er eine Schwester gehabt? Auch meine Cousinen konnten ihm nicht helfen" (4: 37). Later, the narrator stresses once again: "Er war nicht für Mädchen, auch nicht für Schillings Schwester. Und meine Cousinen aus Berlin hat er angeguckt wie ein Fisch. Wenn überhaupt, dann war mit Jungens bei ihm etwas los; womit ich nicht sagen will, daß Mahlke verkehrt herum war" (4: 43). Other than his devotion to the Virgin and possible interest in males, Mahlke displays very little sexual interest in anyone, with the exception of Tulla Pokriefke.

As the female villain, Tulla stands alone as the one woman who succeeds in distracting Mahlke from his dedication to the Virgin Mary. As argued above, her success in compelling him to demonstrate his masculine superiority on the minesweeper was not due to her sexual allurements at that time, but rather due to her persuasive persistence. At the same time, Mahlke exploits the opportunity, submitting to Tulla's persistent demands as an excuse to give his comrades a show. Indeed, Pilenz argues that Mahlke's main motivation for most of his actions and behavior is his desire to be seen and get attention (4: 23, 59).⁴⁸ Later in the novella when Mahlke claims he has slept with her, Tulla's sexual influence is only incidental and seems to be just a convenient excuse, since he confides that he does not wish to return to the war because of her: "War doll gestern mit

⁴⁷ Karl Ruhleder, "A Pattern of Messianic Thought in Gunter Grass's *Cat and Mouse*," *The German Quarterly* 39 (1966): 605-7.

⁴⁸ See also Pikar 237-8.

der kleinen Pokriefke. Hätt ich nicht gedacht. Die ist ganz anders, als sie tut. Also ehrlich gesagt: Wegen der will ich nicht mehr raus" (4: 161). Basically, Tulla is being used as an excuse, a reason, as a superficial motivation for his actions both on the minesweeper and later as he deserts. He never does fall in love with her, "Nein, Mahlke machte sich nicht viel aus Tulla, wenn sie auch später mit ihm zu tun bekommen haben soll" (4: 43). Eventually, Mahlke admits she is not the real reason why he has deserted, but that he is a little scared and has had enough of the war (4: 162). Perhaps Tulla provided him with momentary satisfaction, but she was also a means to accomplish an end in both instances. As the female villain and Other in this text, she is Mahlke's convenient scapegoat. She is culpable for tempting him and for his decision to desert.

Tulla's brief appearances in this account nevertheless provoke considerable irritation in the narrator. She is his splinter under the skin, who interferes with his objectives and exercises influence over him and his friends. She is definitely guilty of all that she undertakes, but she is also guilty of resisting the biological and historical impediments that have defined an impossible role for her in a patriarchal society. Because she has resisted a role that other women in the text have accepted, and stands as a threat to man's status or security, she is singled out as different, described as an animal, and vilified. In Grass' subsequent work, *Hundejahre*, her role as a female villain develops in greater detail.

Chapter 3: Tulla Pokriefke in *Hundejahre*

After having obtained a questionable reputation in *Katz und Maus* through a few brief appearances, Tulla Pokriefke becomes in Book Two of *Hundejahre* almost the sole focus and recipient of Harry Liebenau's love letters. Due to this attention to her life, behavior, and interaction with others, Tulla's character expands and develops, though her personality does not seem to vary from that with which the reader might have become acquainted in *Katz und Maus*. Tulla does not seem to change much. She remains a cruel and unfeeling persecutor, who challenges man's authority and security.

While investigating Tulla's role as a villain in *Hundejahre*, a parallel analysis of another woman, Jenny Brunies, demonstrates more fully the extent to which Tulla deviates from the norms of society and persists as a threat to man and his authority. An analysis of Jenny's character and interaction with Tulla is significant, because she is frequently considered Tulla's female counterpart: Henri Plard notes the Tulla-Jenny polarity,⁴⁹ and W. G. Cunliffe speaks of Tulla's vicious nature and "beguiling impulsiveness," in contrast to Jenny's "shy and unenterprising" personality.⁵⁰ While Tulla possesses those least desirable traits, Jenny's qualities are more innocuous and endearing. "Only together," says Cunliffe, "could they make a complete woman; they stay apart, the one to vanish and the other to wither away."⁵¹ Corresponding with

⁴⁹ Plard 286.

⁵⁰ W. G. Cunliffe, "Aspects of the Absurd in Gunter Grass," *Wisconsin Studies in Contemporary Literature* 7 (1966): 314.

⁵¹ Cunliffe 314.

Cunliffe's projection of their necessary and mutual proximity, they reunite in Grass's later novella, *Im Krebsgang*. However, this proximity in *Hundejahre* is more likely conceived, not because both are necessary to create a whole, but in order to illustrate a parallel to the Amsel-Matern relationship.⁵² Besides, female villains in other works (including Niobe, the Schwarze Köchin, and Vero Lewand) have not required a complimentary figure in order to reach a state of wholeness. In *Hundejahre*, Tulla plays the role of the villain, while Jenny, who is frequently Tulla's victim, conforms to the role of the oppressed woman as described by Beauvoir.⁵³

The heritage of both figures has symbolic significance for the time period depicted in the novel, a time when the empowered National Socialists promote a racist ideology and ultimately exterminate millions of Jews, hundreds of thousands of Gypsies, and scores of others deemed of an inferior race. The parallel Amsel-Matern relationship ruptures as a result of Matern's affiliation with the Nazi party, which discriminates against and condemns Amsel because of his Jewish ancestry. However, the racial affiliations of both Jenny and Tulla seem to have only incidental import with regards to their roles as villain and victim, particularly during their childhood when neither is familiar with the origins of the other.

Tulla Pokriefke was born to August and Erna Pokriefke in Langfuhr, a suburb of Danzig, but her parents are originally from the more rural area known as the Koschneiderei, which was (at that time) part of Poland. The villages of the Koschneiderei retain an essentially German culture during the centuries of vascillating state allegiance

⁵² See Keele 84-5, 150.

⁵³ I address Jenny's symbolic role as a Holocaust victim in the concluding chapter.

between Prussia and Poland. In his account, Harry Liebenau depicts the Pokriefkes as coarse country bumpkins, with limited skills and intellectual capacity. Harry's aunt and uncle, August and Erna Pokriefke, move in with his family in their apartment house, and August begins working for Harry's father. Evidently, August has little talent for the skilled labor required of him at the shop, so he receives the manageable task of stirring the glue pot. Speaking of Erna Pokriefke's Koschneider dialect, Harry queries, "wer konnte das verstehen? Wer konnte das aussprechen?" (5: 154). Later, Harry notes with an air of petulance that all of the Pokriefkes are shorter in size, likely because of their Koschneider heritage (5: 162). Furthermore, the Pokriefke family seems to live in poverty, and they are rarely able to afford unnecessary extravagances for their daughter.

Like Tulla, Jenny comes from a background that is also deemed inferior and uncivilized. The narrator of the first book, Herr Brauxel, reports that Jenny's ancestors are forest Gypsies who occasionally cross the German-Polish border and perform various tasks for the Förster (5: 129). Jenny, formerly known as Estersweh, is the "hungriges, zahnloses Grams" carried by the Gypsy Bidandengero in a little bundle (5: 139). Eventually, Studienrat Oswald Brunies obtains the apparently abandoned and screaming bundle, and later adopts her as his own daughter without divulging her true origins. Jenny thus grows up as a German in relative affluence and comfort. Compared to Tulla, she is spoiled and receives special treatment from her devoted adoptive father. For instance, Brunies indulges her with excessive sweets and accommodates her walking difficulties by pushing her around in a stroller: "Immer noch liegt das fünfeinhalbjährige Mädchen in einem großen Kinderwagen, weil es Schwierigkeiten mit dem Laufen hat" (5: 158). Brunies does not hesitate to lavish on his daughter such expenses as her piano lessons,

ballet lessons, and a constantly fashionable wardrobe of new clothes. Accordingly, Jenny lives in affluence and comfort with an educated and successful adoptive father, while Tulla lives in indigence with uneducated and unskilled parents from an inferior background.

The difference in economic situation, instead of the difference in race, is more likely the underlying cause for tension between the two figures. Although Jenny herself never directly incites the tension, she very quickly becomes the target of Tulla's ill-will. As illustrated by several cases of conflict between the two, Tulla's and Jenny's roles as villain and victim seem to correspond with their respective economic conditions in life. For example, Tulla forces Jenny to demonstrate her ballet training in the snow, thus mocking her and demonstrating her own physical and authoritative superiority (5: 276-8). Later, she orders her cousin to steal Jenny's silver ring (5: 360). However, not all of Tulla's malicious acts can be tied to her economic situation.

More accurately, Tulla is not a normal girl and so she does not behave in the manner typical of other girls. For Harry Liebenau, she is "mehr ein Etwas als ein Mädchen," which is consistent with Pilenz's observation in *Katz und Maus* (4: 38, 43; 5: 159, 217). Kristin Veel speaks of Tulla as an "almost mythic creature, who is simultaneously supernatural and grotesquely blunt."⁵⁴ In contrast, Jenny is never referred to as an "Etwas," but is always a "Mädchen" (5: 144, 153, 158, 279, 297, 299, 433).⁵⁵ In addition, she seems very normal and human, although she does demonstrate exceptional

⁵⁴ Kristin Veel, "Virtual Memory in Günter Grass's *Im Krebsgang*," *German Life and Letters* 57 (2004): 207.

⁵⁵ I verified this claim by performing a word search in the complete text of *Hundejahre* in MS Word format.

talent as a ballerina. Jenny and Tulla differ in terms of physical form and ability, sex, reproduction, and authority.

Jenny Brunies suffers through her childhood as a morbidly obese girl. On numerous occasions, Harry refers to her as “dick” and “pummelig” with “Fettsäulen” for legs (5: 157, 158, 173, 205, 206, 224, 226). Harry also insinuates that her bulkiness interferes with her ability to walk and her early efforts with ballet: “Bei aller Ballerinen-Ausstrahlung, bot Jenny den Anblick eines rosa Schweinchens” (5: 158, 226). He does not dispute that Jenny has talent and potential as a ballerina, but he implies that her unusual size functions as a handicap. In fact, her father introduces her to ballet as a way to help her improve her health and fitness (5: 224).

Following a traumatic experience in the snow, Jenny’s appearance changes radically and instantaneously. Instead of a pudgy, baby-faced girl, she transforms into a slender, shapely young woman, who now wins the adulation of neighbors and acquaintances, including Harry’s mother: “Jennys Anblick konnte meine Mutter rühren” (5: 298). As a ballerina, Jenny acquires a graceful bearing and enjoys a successful first performance as the *Eiskönigin*. However, despite years of devoted training, she fails to develop the ideal “schönen hohen Spann” possessed by every “echte Ballarina,” until the “zerbrechlicher Strich” is injured during a bomb attack (5: 284, 435, 441). Ironically, Jenny only attains this state of perfection as a ballerina with a perfect, high instep as a cripple.

Unlike Jenny’s experience, Tulla changes very little through her childhood and adolescent years. Tulla is always depicted as small, thin, and even sylphlike, yet her face and body are otherwise unattractive. As a child, Tulla is “knochig” and “ein magerer

unverzweigter Schatten” (5: 170). Harry stresses that she is smaller than others her age, which is a common characteristic of the Koschneider people (5: 162). As teenagers, the skinny Tulla and slender Jenny discover that they have approximately the same weight (5: 305). Nevertheless, Harry contends that the similarities in appearance end with their weight: “Dabei war Tulla genau so dünn [wie Jenny], wenn auch anders dünn. Aber Tullas windige Figur erschreckte. Jennys Figur stimmte nachdenklich” (5: 298). Another difference is Tulla’s face, which is “dreieckig und so klein,” so that “die Naslöcher das Größte in ihrem Gesicht [waren]” (5: 159, 167). Her face also develops acne in her adolescent years (5: 389). Tulla’s face is not as attractive as Jenny’s “Puppengesicht” (5: 266, 284). Although Tulla’s physical features are not pleasant like those of Jenny, Tulla nevertheless possesses other characteristics that give her a physical advantage and pose a threat to man’s safety and status.

Tulla is extremely agile and nimble, which allows her to navigate around obstacles with ease, avoid harm, and escape when necessary. According to Harry, Tulla is a “laufend[es], springend[es], kletternd[es], insgesamt fliegend[es] Etwas” (5: 159). Tulla is “federleicht,” and can “durch und über den Schnee laufen, ohne eine Spur zu lassen” (5: 265, 270). When she has Harras attack Felsner-Imbs, she recognizes the risk of punishment and flees in an almost miraculous manner: “Tulla war zu Luft geworden, nicht zu bestrafen” (5: 233). On another occasion when she incites Harras to attack Felsner-Imbs for a second time, she assumes the frightened countenance of an innocent child, and disappears once more (5: 249). Each time she misbehaves, she saves herself with her exceptional abilities and Harry frequently suffers the consequences for her actions.

However, Harry is not always the unfortunate sufferer of her antics, as when she persecutes Eddi Amsel and easily eludes Matern's clumsy efforts to catch her. Harry makes the following observations during this encounter: "[Matern] greift nach dem Ding, das Itzich schreit. Amsel steht. Matern faßt Tulla nicht... Matern greift daneben. Tullas Zunge. Schnelle Beine... Tulla federt auf Bohlen, über Sägeböcke gelegt... Tulla federt sich von der Bohle weg... rollt im Sand... Tulla, tanzend und losgelassen, immer das Wort" (5: 217). This elusive, sylph-like figure named Tulla, who is "losgelassen" like some sort of animal, utilizes her abilities to achieve her objectives and escape possible retribution.

Although Tulla possesses a remarkable ability to escape most reprisals due to her nefarious doings, she is unable to avoid the retaliatory reaction of Walter Matern, her parallel figure. Several of her companions, including Harry, Matern, and Störtebeker, are stationed at an anti-aircraft battery and endeavor to ignore a large, white mound of bones in the distance, from which emanates the repugnant stench of "Knochenleim" and soap. Harry recalls that "niemand sprach von dem Knochenberg. Aber alle sahen rochen schmeckten ihn" (5: 402). As evident in their parody of Heideggerian language, no one is willing to acknowledge the reality of the horror before them. Only Tulla accepts the challenge to verify the truth of the Knochenberg's composition. When she returns and proclaims the already known truth with a skull as evidence, Matern reacts harshly: "Des Feldwebels flache Hand traf die linke Seite ihres Gesichtes von der Schläfe übers Ohr bis zum Kinn" (5: 495). Although she does not manage to avoid this blow, she does not seem disheartened: "Tullas Kopf wurde kaum kleiner" (5: 496). Like Luzie Rennwand in *Blechtrommel*, and similar to a previous experience with Joachim Mahlke,

Tulla does not cry or retaliate in anger because of this painful blow. However, she does not submit to him by recanting her observations or by denying the proof that she brought with her. Instead, she bears his aggression and remains strong in her conviction. Besides, she just now realizes that she is pregnant, and challenges Matern to dispute her once again (5: 406-7).

Jenny and Tulla are also different in how they approach their sexual roles. While Jenny conforms to the societal expectation for chastity before marriage (5: 372), Tulla engages in diligent philandering after deciding that she wants a baby. With her *Knochenleimgeruch* bedazzling her victims, she succeeds in seducing a number of men and school boys (5: 390). Even Harry Liebenau struggles to resist the allure of her fumes: “Ich konnte nicht weg, klebte: Dein Knochenleim” (5: 160). At a later time, he continues to insist that he is “von Tulla verseucht. Selbst als Oberschülerin, in einigermaßen reinlichen Kleidern, blieb ihr der Knochenleimgeruch; und ich haftete und wehrte mich kaum” (5: 360). As Neuhaus suggests, the *Knochenleimgeruch* seems to be some sort of aphrodisiac that attracts men: “Knochenleimgeruch als erotisches Stimulans ist auffallend genug.”⁵⁶ Assisted by her *Knochenleimgeruch* and indiscriminate solicitations, she eventually gets pregnant.

For Tulla, sex is useful only in that it leads to pregnancy. Harry repeatedly reminds the reader of Tulla’s intentions, that she just wants a child (5: 339, 353, 390, etc.). Thus, she does not comprehend the tragedy depicted in the film of a girl who is raped, gets pregnant, and then kills herself (5: 411). Tulla does not care how the child is

⁵⁶ Neuhaus 184.

conceived, be it through marriage, fornication, adultery, or rape; she views the goal of conceiving the child as the paramount purpose of any form of intercourse, and where any unpleasant consequence is irrelevant. Tulla just wants a baby, so she uses her male victims to that end. And once she is pregnant, she becomes celibate.

The reader cannot be certain of Jenny's desires to have children or be a mother, because she has thus far conformed to the societal restrictions confining childbirth to married couples — and Jenny never gets married in this text. In contrast, the fact that Tulla wants a baby is obvious: "Tulla zum Beispiel, die ein gutes halbes Jahr jünger als Jenny war, fing an, sich ein Kind zu wünschen" and "Tulla wollte, kaum waren wir im Holzschuppen allein, ein Kind von mir" (5: 336). Tulla says, "Jetzt will ich ein Kind, sofort" and "Am liebsten möcht ich von irgend jemand ein Kind bekommen" (5: 339, 379). Her efforts are sincere and indefatigable, because "Tulla [versuchte] es mit allen Waffengattungen und Diensträngen vergeblich" and even turns to boys her own age with allegedly greater potency (5: 390). Her desire to mother a child is tremendous, as are her efforts to achieve that goal. However, she fails. Despite her success in conceiving, she loses the embryo through miscarriage, likely because she carelessly leaps from a moving street car (contrary to Harry's admonitions) (5: 418-20). Her agility does not fail her, but in the process of her "geschickt" and "katzenleicht" leap from the car, she terminates her child's life and all of her previous efforts are rendered futile (5: 418). In *Hundejahre*, Tulla does not succeed in bringing forth and nurturing life, but she is instead more frequently responsible for suffering and death.

On those occasions when Tulla is responsible for suffering or death, she is acting or reacting against a form of authority and exerting her own authority. Although Tulla

persecutes other figures, Jenny is one of her most frequent victims, mainly because she is so willing to yield to Tulla's demands. Tulla first exhibits her resentment of Jenny through a foreboding display of contempt, prompted by Jenny's innocent refusal to let Tulla lead her. Tulla's face contorts in fury into a triangular shape, resembling the triangular Nazi flags displayed on the pier. The other companions are oblivious. Only Oskar Matzerath witnesses Tulla spitting three times into Jenny's baby carriage (5: 172-3).⁵⁷ By spitting into the carriage, Tulla voices her spite for Jenny and expresses her unwillingness to suffer rejection or refusal without seeking revenge. This action also foreshadows future attempts by Tulla to hurt her victim (usually Jenny) physically or emotionally.

On another occasion, Tulla has captured Jenny and holds her captive in a secluded location on the pier. They are playing a vicious game: when Tulla orders Jenny to do or say something, Jenny obeys. For instance, Tulla orders Jenny to repeat some embarrassing or vulgar phrases or to eat from a squirming jellyfish. Although Jenny does not enjoy Tulla's company or the game, she continues to participate, "denn Tulla erschreckte sie" (5: 173). Tulla has successfully intimidated Jenny into submission.

Tulla demonstrates her independent and authoritative character in all of her associations with others. When playing with her companions, she insists in controlling what happens, and will not let anyone usurp her leading role. A small example of Tulla's interaction with Harry and Jenny while sledding illustrates her hunger for control: "Nur Tulla ließ sich manchmal von mir, manchmal von Jenny ziehen. Jenny zog Tulla gerne

⁵⁷ Keele suggests that because Tulla's enraged visage resembles the Nazi flag, the action of spitting into the baby carriage symbolizes the impending injustices to be committed by National Socialist zealots (81-2).

und bot sich oft zum Ziehen an. Aber Tulla ließ sich nur ziehen, wenn es ihr paßte, und nicht, wenn es ihr angeboten wurde” (5: 267). Tulla must give orders and have others do things for her, but does not permit people to do things for her out of the goodness of their heart. She must control all of the actions of those with whom she interacts.

Sometimes, Tulla’s motives for manipulating her colleagues and playmates are not entirely clear, although it is noticeable that she is always the leader and authority in her group of playmates. At the Gutenberg memorial, Tulla orchestrates a strategem to frighten her playmates, especially Jenny (5: 269-80). Having chosen Jenny as her victim, Tulla orders Jenny to dance in the snow, and she complies with these strange, cruel demands. Stumbling a few times, Jenny finally lies still on the ground; however, Tulla is still not satisfied. She throws Jenny down when she tries to get up, rolls her into a snowman, and then abandons the snowman with the rest of her group (5: 278-9). This malicious deed is recognized as “Tulla’s most intense act of persecution” and “victimisation.”⁵⁸

When both Jenny and Tulla are a few years older, Tulla forces (“zwang”) Jenny to place nine leeches on her body: “Wenn du das nicht machst sofort, dann verblutet mein ältester Bruder sofort, der in Frankreich im Krieg ist” (5: 338). However, after losing considerable blood and fainting, Jenny is willing to repeat the procedure in the future in order to help save Tulla’s brother. Jenny’s generous, submissive, self-sacrificing attitude contrasts sharply with Tulla’s greedy, domineering, and inimical attitude.

Tulla’s interaction with other figures in this text further affirms her nefarious

⁵⁸ Reddick 188.

character as she asserts her dominance and flagrant malignancy. Tulla does not just victimize her complimentary figure, Jenny, but she also inflicts her scorn and malefactions on figures such as Felsner-Imbs, Eddi Amsel, Oswald Brunies, and her own beloved pet, Harras. Felsner-Imbs fears for his safety and very life on at least three occasions when Tulla incites her vicious German Shepherd on him (5: 216-7, 248-50, 263-4). As discussed previously, she is never punished for these acts.

Another case also involves her pet, Harras. Since spending several days in the dog's hut, eating its meat, and behaving like it, she and the animal have formed a close bond. Thus, she becomes envious of Eddi Amsel's natural and intimate interaction with her dog. Perhaps the most annoying aspect of Amsel's relationship with the German Shepherd, for Tulla, is his ability to exert his polite authority over the animal and compel it to respond according to his gentle requests (5: 211). By addressing Harras by the name of Pluto, Amsel seems to be usurping Tulla's former control over the animal. Henry observes that "Amsels Macht über den Höllenhund Pluto wurde zu ihrer Ohnmacht unserem Harras gegenüber. Nicht etwa, daß der Hund ihr nicht mehr folgte..., nur führte er ihre immer strenger hervorgestoßenen Anforderungen so zerstreut und mechanisch aus" (5: 213). The "blindwütend" and "heranstürmend" Tulla proceeds to persecute him in an effort to drive him away and salvage some of her influence over Harras.

Ironically, Tulla later uses her influence over Harras to inflict his doom. When Matern offers him meat, Harras does not approach the meat until Tulla encourages him, in spite of the knowledge that the meat is likely poisoned. A distraught Harry demands to know why she allows him to eat the poisoned meat, and she responds, referring to Matern: "Na ihm hättä doch nicht jehorcht, oder?" Seemingly, Tulla permits Harras'

premature death because she is the only one who has the power to do so. But Tulla is responsible for an act far more atrocious than her complicity in murdering her dog: she is responsible for Oswald Brunies death. Because of her accusation and insidious provocation during the interrogation, Brunies incriminates himself by committing the very crime of which he has been accused, and he ultimately loses his life in a concentration camp (5: 363-368, 423). Tulla thus demonstrates her propensity to injure and destroy the lives of others. Supporting this view, J. B. Neveux notes the following: “Il y a ... un démon malin qui bouleverse tout par ses actions imprévues dont le seul effet est de détruire, Tulla Pokriefke.”⁵⁹ As a villain, Tulla tends to hurt others, but she also challenges man’s authority in another manner.

Throughout the events of her later adolescent years, Tulla maintains her dominance and authority by remaining single. Even after getting pregnant, she does not yield to the cultural tradition of getting married. She does not even seem to recognize any reason to feel ashamed for something that her society recognizes as a scandal. During a later pregnancy, Tulla describes her parents’ displeasure and embarrassment for her condition:

Fier Mama und Papa war ech natierlich ne Schande mit maim dicken Bauch. Immer wenn wer von die andern Flichtling nach miä jefragt hat, hädd Mama jesagt: “Ihr Verlobter kämpft anne Front.” Oder: “Aijentlich sollt es ne Ferntrauung jeben mit ihrem Verlobten, der anne Westfront kämpft. Wener nur nech jefallen is.” Aber zu miä ham se immer nur von

⁵⁹ “There is ... a malevolent demon, Tulla Pokriefke, who overwhelms everything through her unforeseen actions, wherein the single result is destruction.” J. B. Neveux, “Günter Grass le Vistulien,” *Etudes Germaniques* 21 (1966): 548.

Schande jered. (18: 106)

Tulla does not indicate that she is concerned about what others think of her condition. Moreover, the reader learns in *Krebsgang* that Tulla never gets married, and thus maintains her authority over man.

In *Hundejahre*, Tulla's inability or lack of desire to comply with the demands of nature and the expectations of society enforces her position as a female villain, particularly since her actions and behavior harm the status and safety of other figures. Unlike Jenny Brunies, who is fragile, submissive, and self-sacrificing, Tulla is greedy and threatening. Unlike Tulla, Jenny tends to allow the male figures in her life to dictate her activities and goals. Her adoptive father constrains her to a baby carriage until approximately her sixth birthday, and is responsible for her obesity. He introduces her to a rigorous training schedule in music and ballet. Later, she submits herself to Goldmäulchen's authority as he directs her training and mentors her development. Tulla, on the other hand, consistently maintains her independence from authority figures, and even exerts her own authority as a leader over groups of playmates and a gang of fellow adolescents. Throughout *Hundejahre*, Tulla demonstrates her transcendence over natural and societal restrictions that have confined woman to oppressed roles. In doing so, she also shows her tendency to persist as a threat to man's authority and the safety of others. Jenny and Tulla continue in these same roles in the recent *Im Krebsgang*, although both have developed considerably and some changes in their characters become evident.

Chapter 4: Tulla Pokriefke in Im Krebsgang

In a larger narrative about collective guilt, Nazi recidivism, and worldwide racism, three generations of the Pokriefke heritage in this novella find themselves unavoidably entangled in their association with the *Wilhelm Gustloff* tragedy. The matriarch of the post-war Pokriefke family is Tulla, who narrowly escapes the sinking *Wilhelm Gustloff* refugee ship on January 30, 1945. That same night, she allegedly gives birth to Paul on the deck of the *Torpedoboot Löwe*,⁶⁰ bringing forth life in the face of ubiquitous and multitudinous suffering and death. Because of his mother's persistent and "eternal" fascination with the traumatic experience, Paul learns of his association with the catastrophe from a young age, and finally compelled by an interested "Jemand" (and not his mother), he undertakes to write a personal account of the disaster.

Paul thus begins researching the *Wilhelm Gustloff* disaster, and coincidentally discovers that his son, Konny, is disseminating (under Tulla's urging) a history of the *Wilhelm Gustloff* as Neo-Nazi propaganda on a website. Konny's fanatical interest in the *Gustloff* story and sympathy for the racist Nazi ideology leads to his slaying of the website's antagonist, Wolfgang Stremplin, also known by his internet alias as David Frankfurter. Nevertheless, Paul insists that Tulla is guilty for indoctrinating his son with her incorrigible views and skewed memories, and for ultimately provoking Konny's murderous deed: "Sie, nur sie ist schuld, daß es mit dem Jungen danebenging," and "Sie,

⁶⁰ Paul disputes his mother's claim that he was born on the *Löwe*, and instead speculates that he was more likely born on the sinking *Wilhelm Gustloff* (18: 146-7).

allein sie ist schuldig” (18: 68, 193). An analysis of Paul’s account of Tulla’s dealings in this text will indicate the extent of her innocence or culpability and further illustrate whether she remains the villain of her earlier years.

As noted in previous chapters, Tulla Pokriefke demonstrates in *Katz und Maus* and *Hundejahre* (and also in *Blechtrommel* under the alias Luzie Rennwand) how she resists those natural handicaps and societal conventions which confine woman to a position that is inferior to man. Moreover, Tulla threatens man’s security and usurps his position of superiority. However, she is not a stagnant figure. Rather, she is dynamic, changing, and complex. In this novella, Tulla does not persist as the unchanging villain of previous chapters, although she retains most of the characteristics of such.

Tulla possesses remarkable physical abilities, which seem to assist her as she survives and excels in a male-dominated society. Her most extraordinary physical feat in *Krebsgang* is her survival of the *Wilhelm Gustloff* catastrophe and purportedly effortless delivery of her only child immediately thereafter. Tulla boards the ship “im hochschwangeren Zustand,” and then delivers her child on the *Löwe* (18: 114, 145). The delivery proceeds so smoothly, Tulla tells Paul, “das jing wie nix. Ainfach rausjeflutscht biste” (18: 145). Tulla’s experience makes childbirth seem like a simple procedure, which is the exact opposite for most other women who must endure hours of excruciating and exhausting labor.

For the normal woman, childbirth is not a simple process and therefore typically requires the assistance of others. According to Beauvoir, this need for assistance in childbirth entails a form of dependence:

Ce qui est significatif, c'est que normalement la femme — comme certaine femelles domestiques — a besoin d'un secours pour accomplir la fonction à laquelle la nature la voue; il y a des paysannes aux mœurs rudes et des filles-mères honteuses qui s'accouchent elles-même: mais leur solitude entraîne souvent la mort de l'enfant ou chez la mère des maladies inguérissables. Dans le moment même où la femme achève de réaliser son destin féminin, elle est encore dépendent.⁶¹

Although Tulla insists that her delivery “jing wie nix,” she is fortunate to have help on the sinking *Gustloff* when her labor begins (18: 145). She recalls how Dr. Richter gives her medication to postpone the labor (18: 138). In addition, Tulla receives preferential treatment because of her condition, being placed along with other pregnant women on a life boat and thus surviving the encounter (18: 138). Once on the *Löwe*, she again undergoes labor pains and receives assistance with the delivery (18: 147). Although Tulla demonstrates a remarkable strength and physical tenacity, Paul's account suggests that Tulla survives only because she submits herself to man.

Paradoxically, Tulla's pregnant condition, considered a handicap by Beauvoir, actually saves her life in a catastrophe that took the lives of thousands of others. Most importantly, Tulla assumes an unusual status that is contrary to her previous position as a perpetrator of death and suffering: she brings forth life. The narrator's description of the event is stirring in the way it juxtaposes a cry associated with the first few gasps of a

⁶¹ Beauvoir 2: 317; “It is significant that woman—like the females of certain domesticated animals—requires help in performing the function assigned to her by nature; there are peasants living in harsh circumstance and shamefaced unmarried mothers who give birth alone, but their being alone at this time often results in death for the baby or incurable illness for the mother. At just the time when woman attains the realization of her feminine destiny, she is still dependent” 505.

newborn and the innumerable cries of those struggling to gasp for the last time: “Doch soll ich, nach Mutters Erinnerung, mit meinem ersten Schrei jenen weithin tragenden und aus tausend Stimmen gemischten Schrei übertönt haben, diesen finalen Schrei, der von überall herkam” (18: 145). In spite of her previous association with suffering and death, Tulla has managed to create life, a newborn child who seems to cry out and overpower the shrieks of those perishing in agony around him. In this manner, Tulla succumbs to the reproductive demands of her species as spoken of by Beauvoir.⁶² Tulla now risks having to relinquish her independence in order to survive as a mother of a child.

Although her pregnancy and parturition momentarily compel her to rely on others for her survival, Tulla recovers quickly. Upon arrival in the Kolberg harbor, other survivors require emergency medical attention and many are dispatched to medical centers in ambulances. But Paul dryly reports that his mother, though recovering from the recent delivery of a child in traumatic conditions, is deemed capable of continuing on her way without additional assistance (18: 153). Because of her physical hardiness and mental tenacity, Tulla is able to maintain her independence and provide for herself and her child while fleeing from the advancing Russian troops.

As a mother, Tulla does her best to ensure her son’s survival. Because her breasts fail to lactate properly, she secures sustenance for Paul from other mothers with “überschüssiger Milch” (18: 155-6, 165, 178). In this condition, she is never subject to one of the so-called handicaps of motherhood, claimed by Beauvoir to be a form of slavery.⁶³ Mothers under the duress of nursing would have struggled much more than

⁶² Beauvoir: 1: 56, 62-9; 20, 29-32.

⁶³ Beauvoir 2: 321; 508.

Tulla, who is free from the inconvenience of “une dure servitude.”⁶⁴ Tulla can more easily maintain her independence as she struggles for survival for herself and her child. Eventually, they settle in Schwerin, and Tulla finds work as a carpenter.

Tulla is strong and capable of surviving, but her role as a mother is somewhat questionable. She does care for Paul’s fundamental needs, but her situation and behavior with him indicates that she simultaneously neglects him and intends to use him. Immediately after settling in Schwerin after the war, Tulla obtains an apprenticeship in carpentry (18: 12). Indeed, Tulla’s career as a carpenter was necessary for their survival, but it also meant that she could not devote as much personal attention to raising her son. When asked by his “Arbeitgeber” specific details about his mother during his childhood, Paul struggles to remember anything significant in addition to her “Knochenleimgeruch.” He recalls, “ich aber wurde, weil es noch keine Krippe gab, zuerst bei einer Nachbarin, dann in einem Kindergarten abgestellt” (18: 54). Because of her career, she is unable to spend time with him or nurture a healthy relationship with him. Paul argues that his situation as a fatherless and almost motherless child was not unique in East Germany,⁶⁵ but he also speculates that his mother would have chosen the same career-path had they settled in West Germany (18: 12-3, 54). Regardless of where they have settled, Tulla pursues a career and neglects her son, except when giving him the minimal attention that satisfies her own objectives.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Beauvoir argues that the implementation of a communist system in Eastern States and the Soviet Union failed to create conditions that promoted true equality between man and woman (1: 100-4; 57-60).

Tulla's experience with the *Gustloff* becomes for her an unquenchable obsession. Paul recalls his Mother's radical interest in the subject, how she is constantly telling him the long and never-ending story of the *Wilhelm Gustloff* and her flight to East Germany (18: 33, 57, 131). Because of this fanatical interest in her experience, Tulla makes it clear that she has great expectations for Paul: "Von saine Jeburt an hab ech jewußt, aus dem Bengel wird mal ne richtge Beriehmthait" (18: 42). On another occasion, she says, "Wie aisig die See jewesen is und wie die Kinderchen alle koppunter. Das mußte aufschraiben. Biste ons schuldig als glücklich Ieberlebender. Werd ech dir aines Tages erzählen, klitzeklain, ond denn schreibste auf" (18: 31). Specifically, Tulla wants her son to write an account of her experience; that seems to be the only purpose for her relationship with him.⁶⁶ When he does not submit to her demands (quickly enough), she turns to her grandson to accomplish her objectives and is no longer interested in Paul: "Aus mainem Konradchen wird mal bestimmt was Großes. Nich son Versager wie du" (18: 45). In addition to her failure to spend time in building a strong relationship with him, Tulla also sought to use Paul for her own purposes. She does not seem to have been a successful mother, at least not according to societal conventions described by Beauvoir.

Clearly, Paul's relationship with his mother is strained. He rarely comments on any positive characteristics that she might possess, and mostly emphasizes her negative qualities. He describes how he once almost begins to feel affection for his mother, but then insists that his mother, "dieses verflucht zähe Miststück," begins to annoy him once again (19). He further maintains that he would rather have been that one orphaned child,

⁶⁶ Later, Paul speculates that Tulla has only loved her brother, Konrad, his son, Konny, and Jenny, if she has ever loved anyone at all (18: 207).

the last survivor found of the *Wilhelm Gustloff*, to be adopted and raised by a loving, happy family, as he imagines it, and by parents who care for him (18: 142-4). Although he acknowledges her role as the mother who brought him into the world, he severs himself from any intimate attachment to her: “ich [nenne sie] nie besitzergreifend ‘meine,’ sondern immer nur ‘Mutter’” (18: 11). Later, Paul grows to detest Tulla for her part in corrupting his son, in addition to her role in bringing him into the world under the circumstances of the *Gustloff* tragedy: “Dafür, Mutter, ... hasse ich Dich” (18: 70). Though Tulla has brought Paul into the world and ensured his survival, she has nevertheless earned his enmity through her endeavors to exploit him and his son.

Tulla Pokriefke fails as a nurturing mother, but she succeeds in utilizing her sexual appeal to attract multiple partners at her whim. Her promiscuity is a common theme in *Katz und Maus* and *Hundejahre*, so it is no surprise that she maintains this “undiminished ability to attract men.”⁶⁷ Even while she is pregnant on the *Gustloff*, Paul maintains that she is still capable of attracting men: “Mag sein, daß sie, wie es ihre Art war und geblieben ist, selbst im hochschwangeren Zustand männliches Schiffspersonal anzuziehen verstand: sie verfügt nun mal über einen inwendigen Magneten, den sie ‘ain jewisses Etwas’ nennt” (18: 114). This appeal is characterized by her sticky “Knochenleimgeruch,” which was frequently mentioned by Harry Liebenau in *Hundejahre* in the sense of an aphrodisiac. Later in her life as a professional carpenter, this alluring (but malodorous) essence persists, and continues to function just as effectively as when she was a younger girl:

⁶⁷ Veel 207.

Besonders zog sie Männer an. Das war, wie man weiß, schon immer so. Ihre Schulfreundin Jenny hat mir von all den Jungs erzählt, die während Mutters Jugendzeit regelrecht an ihr klebengeblieben sind: sie soll von Kindheit an nach Knochenleim gestunken haben; und ich behaupte: selbst in Damp⁶⁸ war noch ein Hauch dieses Geruches zu erahnen. (18: 94-5)

During the reunion of the *Wilhelm Gustloff* survivors in Damp, Tulla seems to attract many kinds of men to her, as suggested by Paul, because of her smell or her “certain something.” He recalls how they “umringten Mutter, die sich andeutungsweise mädchenhaft gab, und kamen nicht von ihr weg” (18: 95). In her youth, Tulla intentionally seduced men because she yearned for a child. Later, she continues to wield her sexuality as a tool for manipulating men, as during the reunion when she persuades the men to cooperate with her grandson, who is researching the tragedy (18: 95). On all occasions, she seems to use her sexuality for her own purposes, and never appears to submit to man’s demands or needs, as evidenced by the many various partners whom she charms and then dismisses at her whim. Although she cannot have been the dominant partner in the physical act of intercourse — in the purely biological sense discussed by Beauvoir — Tulla nevertheless demonstrates her superiority in her sexual relationships with man.

Tulla has also resisted oppression that might have resulted from a societally endorsed marriage. She eschews marriage and terminates relationships with any man who suggests it (18: 57). Paul offers the inadequate explanation, “sie war nicht für Heirat” (18:

⁶⁸ Damp is a small vacation village in Schleswig-Holstein, just south of Denmark’s border in the Kieler Bay of the Baltic Sea.

57). But her lack of interest in marriage does not mean that she is not attracted to men or avoids any relationship with them at all. During her earlier years, as depicted in *Katz und Maus* and *Hundejahre*, “Tulla Pokriefke ist als Halbwüchsige nach Männern verrückt gewesen” (18: 56). Indeed, Paul does not know who his father is: “Weiß der Teufel, wer Mutter dickgemacht hat” (18: 151). This interest in men does not diminish after her traumatic experience on the *Gustloff*, for she continually sees all sorts of men, Paul recalls: “Männer gab’s mehr als genug. Aber die blieben nicht lange” (18: 56). She sees the men on her terms, and will not commit herself to a long-term relationship. Tulla’s propensity to pair with men at her whim, not only demonstrates her sovereign independence from the societal requirement of marriage, but it also suggests that she continues to occupy since her adolescence the position of the philandering female, which was previously man’s historical privilege, according to Beauvoir.⁶⁹

In this narrative, Tulla Pokriefke also demonstrates her ability to arrogate to herself leadership responsibilities which were normally reserved for man. Through her success as a carpenter, she eventually obtains the supervisory power over a carpentry brigade, and maintains that position until she is invited to assist with the dismantling of the nationalized economy and privatizing of her industry (18: 21, 44-5). Among her co-workers, she is “beliebt und gefürchtet zugleich” (18: 90). Moreover, she is responsible for introducing a record number of women to the carpentry trade (18: 90). Tulla has had unusual influence for a woman, particularly since she has excelled in leadership positions. In this manner, she is unlike the submissive and subservient woman described

⁶⁹ Beauvoir 2: 197; 427.

by Beauvoir, and she has seized a status that is superior to that of many of her male subordinates.

As discussed earlier, Tulla also plays a dominant role as a mother and grandmother through her unrelenting attempts to have an account of the *Gustloff* catastrophe published. Most importantly, this attitude and its associated behavior reveals how Tulla perseveres until she succeeds in her objectives. She does not surrender when confronted with obstacles. If Tulla wants something, she will eventually get it, even if it means that others will suffer as a result.

Paul has experienced his mother's undaunting and determined hand through much of his life. As a young man, he continues to suffer through his mother's beleaguering impositions that it is his duty to proclaim the disaster of the *Wilhelm Gustloff* to the world. She tells him, "Ech leb nur noch dafier, daß main Sohn aines Tages mecht Zeugnis ablegen" (18: 19). When Paul no longer lives at home, Tulla still finds a way to advance her cause. Sometimes, she sends him letters to remind him, and at other times, she recruits Jenny to relay her admonitions: "Und später... hat mir Tante Jenny... Mutters Ermahnungen zum Dessert geliefert: 'Meine liebe Freundin Tulla setzt immer noch große Erwartungen in dich. Sie läßt dir sagen, daß es deine Sohnespflicht bleibt, endlich aller Welt zu berichten...'" (18: 31-2). According to Paul, this account is evidence of his mother's — and not the commissioner's — influence on him (18: 99). Indeed, the commissioner himself has likewise yielded to Tulla's unrelenting pressure, though she might not realize the extent of her influence: "Und nur ihretwegen mischt sich der Alte ein, gleichfalls gezwungen von ihr, mich zu zwingen, als dürfe nur unter Zwang geschrieben werden, als könne auf diesem Papier nichts ohne Mutter geschehen" (18:

99). Eventually, Tulla relinquishes hope that her son will heed her wishes and write about the disaster: “Baldich wird kainer von ons mehr lebendich sain, nur du. Abä du willst ja nech aufschraiben, was ech diä alles schon immer erzählt hab” (18: 94). However, she does not give up.

When Tulla decides that she can no longer rely on her son to produce an adequate account, she turns to a more complying and credulous writer, her grandson, Konny Pokriefke. Konny visits his grandmother regularly, and eventually moves in with her.

Tulla does not squander the opportunity, and proceeds to indoctrinate him. Paul reports,

Bin sicher, daß Mutter ihn mit ihren Geschichten, die ja nicht nur auf dem Tischlereihof in Langfuhrs Elsenstraße spielten, vollgedröhnt hat. Alles, sogar ihre Abenteuer als Straßenbahnschaffnerin im letzten Kriegsjahr, hat sie ausgepackt. Wie ein Schwamm muß der Junge ihr Gerede aufgesogen haben. Natürlich hat sie ihn auch mit der Story vom ewigsinkenden Schiff abgefüttert. Ab dann war Konny oder ‘Konradchen,’ wie Mutter sagte, ihre große Hoffnung. (18: 44)

Her influence on Konny becomes apparent to Paul when he recognizes familiar stories and utterances on a website, and determines that the source can only be his son (18: 73-4). The longer he spends investigating the proceedings and dialogue on this website, the more he realizes the extent of Tulla’s influence on Konny: “Sobald ich in Konnys Chatroom war, hatte ich das unbeirrbare Gequassel der Ewiggestrigen im Ohr” (18: 89). Tulla is at least somewhat acquainted with the means being used to promulgate her story, because she is the one who gave Konny the “Mac mit allem Drum und Dran” (18: 67). While she might not be aware of the anti-Semitic intent of his website, she confesses

knowledge of his involvement with Neo-Nazis (18: 198). Nevertheless, she is pleased that he has achieved her objective of publishing and disseminating her story (18: 191). In the meantime, her influence on her grandson has evoked irrevokable damage.

Throughout the text, Paul repeatedly suggests that Tulla is responsible for his son's moral decadence. Occasionally, he will admit his own partial guilt, suggesting that he as the father should have devoted more time to raising his child properly (18: 176). However, he asserts forcefully and repeatedly who he believes is the real culprit in corrupting his son. He is convinced of his mother's primary role in ruining his son: "Er [ist] entgültig in Mutters Fange geraten" (18: 193). He reiterates, "sie [began] — kaum war die Mauer weg — meinen Sohn zu kneten. Erst zehn oder elf war Konny, als er seiner Großmutter in die Finger fiel" (18: 100). Looking back, he regrets permitting his mother such unrestrained and unsupervised influence over his son. She is responsible for inculcating her traumatic experiences and controversial views, which seem to reinforce his emerging *Weltanschauung*. Later, when Paul discovers his son disseminating anti-Semitic propoganda, he naturally submits that it is due to Tulla's influence. He suspects Tulla's influence because the language that Konny uses in accusing the Jews of their alleged world conspiracies is redolant of the language used by his mother (18: 73-4). Paul further remembers her relating to him an incriminating experience with Eddi Amsel, wherein she persecutes him and calls him "Itzich" (18: 106). And her explosive reaction during the court proceedings also illustrate her anti-Semitic sentiment (18: 182). Tulla is racist and she has converted her grandson to this anti-Semitic ideology. Knowing of his precariously dangerous dealings with Neo-Nazis, she provides him with the weapon that is later used to slay Wolfgang Stremplin, and then she feigns complete innocence

regarding the weapon when she is interrogated on the witness stand. Because Tulla has engineered her grandson's moral perversion and even supplied him with the murder weapon, the implication is that she is also responsible for the slaying of Wolfgang Stremplin.

With the exception of her role in parturition, Tulla has failed to conform to Beauvoir's model of the woman as Other in every other respect. In resisting the natural requirements of her species and the expectations of society, Tulla has subverted man's status and served as a catalyst for additional suffering and death. Tulla qualifies as a villain, though until the end of the book, the reader cannot be certain of her unchangeable character. The narrator seems to attach a symbolical significance to her figure only in the concluding chapters of the novella. This symbol manifests itself in Tulla's fox skin, which she proudly wears to the trial and throughout her life. The recurring allusions to her fox skin seem to betoken her precursory but mutable illusion of inculpability.

Paul first mentions the existence of a *Fuchspelz* when prompted by his "Arbeitgeber." Paul despises this article of clothing, which has belonged to his mother since she was sixteen, and which she still wears on occasion. In truth, Tulla does not realize that she has done anything wrong or immoral, even though this pelt is payment for her sexual services. Tulla keeps this piece of fur with her on the *Gustloff*, during her flight, and even after she has settled in Schwerin. Significantly, she wears it to the trial of her grandson, even while sitting next to the parents of the slain Wolfgang, as if to proclaim her purportedly irrefutable innocence (18: 179). Paul admits being continually embarrassed by his mother's old-fashioned fox pelt, symbolically suggesting that he was and is ashamed of her unabashed assumption of innocence, when she is actually

reprehensible (18: 176, 179). Nevertheless, he endeavors to demonstrate the measure of her confidence, for she explains in testimony that “das Herz sei ihr seitdem zerrissen” and “ein feuriges Schwert habe sie geteilt” (18: 179-80). She then concedes her role in giving Konny the computer equipment for the purpose of proclaiming her story to the world, and then queries the judge, while moving the fox’s head into central position: “Das ist ja nicht verboten, Herr Richter. Oder?” (18: 181). Of symbolic significance, Tulla does not recognize her guilt even when she has it directly under her nose. A short time later, Tulla’s confidence in her innocence weakens substantially when she learns that Wolfgang was not actually of Jewish heritage: “Sie fummelte am Fuchsfell...” (18: 181). But the fox remains with her throughout the remainder of the proceedings, and is especially prominent as she stands for recognition as one of the survivors of the *Gustloff* and listens intently to the debate about her role in corrupting her grandson (18: 191, 194). It is remarkable that Tulla removes the fox pelt immediately preceding her admission of guilt in providing Konny with the weapon. Tulla is thus capable of recognizing her fallibility if she desires. The fox skin is not a permanent part of her various outfits. Though it is an illusion of innocence, it is also paradoxically tangible evidence of the existence of guilt. Unfortunately, because Tulla has failed to acknowledge her culpability as an anti-Semite and abettor to a crime, she has the potential to perpetuate similar atrocities in the future.

In this text, Tulla Pokriefke is a unique figure representing the female who resists that which is expected of her and consequently poses a threat to man’s safety and security. The other female figures in this text play less dominant roles, though Gabi is perhaps the most independent and authoritative of any of them. As Paul’s wife, she tends to take control of the relationship, as when she decides of her own accord to conceive and

have a child. She also leaves him, divorces him, and begins her own successful career. In this way, she still seems to resist conforming to the model described by Beauvoir. Indeed, she behaves much like a female villain, insofar as she challenges man's status.

The Tante Jenny spoken of in *Krebsgang* is the same Jenny Brunies (later Jenny Angustri) in *Hundejahre*. Paul refers to her repeatedly as "Mutters Schulfreundin" and depicts this former "Eiskönigin" who once was in a "Schneemann" with a constant "Lächeln, das vereist zu sein schien" (5: 290, 305, 350, 693; 18: 18-19, 211). Paul's comment that Jenny frequently gets the chills and drinks "viel heiße Zitrone" evokes Walter Matern's encounter with her in the post-war years at Chez Jenny (5: 690-4, 18: 19, 207). As in *Hundejahre*, Jenny remains Tulla's corresponding, antithetical counterpart.

From *Hundejahre*, the reader knows of the incident wherein Jenny is almost fatally injured (5: 441). Many years following this accident, Paul reports that she is still "verkrüppelt" and somewhat fragile (18: 18). Jenny is weaker, and scarred from the war, whereas Tulla is strong and survives the war relatively well. Paul seems to like Jenny much more, and he explicitly states that he has enjoyed living at her apartment: "Ich wohnte gern bei ihr. Sie verwöhnte mich" (18: 19). He did not enjoy living with his mother. From what we learn of her in this work, Jenny seems to be everything that Tulla is not, including a nurturing mother and a physically fragile and mentally submissive woman.

Despite their contradistinctive characters, Jenny and Tulla seem to have reconciled their differences and enjoy one another's company as close friends. Paul recalls their interaction during visits with each other:

Wenn Mutter Tante Jenny besuchte — und ich Zeuge sein durfte — , wirkte sie schüchtern und gab sich als kleines Mädchen, das ihr kürzlich noch einen üblen Streich gespielt hatte. Nun wollte sie den Schaden wiedergutmachen. Tante Jenny hingegen schien alles, was vor vielen Jahren an Schlimmem geschehen war, verziehen zu haben. Ich sah, wie sie Mutter im Vorbeihumpeln gestreichelt hat. Dabei lispelt sie: ‘Ist ja gut, Tulla, ist ja gut.’ ... Außer den beim Baden ertrunkenen Konrad und neben dem straffällig gewordenen Konny hat Mutter, wenn überhaupt jemanden, ihre Schulfreundin Jenny geliebt. (18: 207)

Tulla apparently regrets her past misdeeds, particularly those which have somehow hurt her friend Jenny. In fact, there seems to be no way to make restitution for the damage — Oswald Brunies perished long ago in the Stutthof concentration camp. At least Tulla recognizes her guilt and suffers mentally because of the pain she has caused Jenny. And Jenny discerns the tremendous change experienced by Tulla: “Tulla hat an sich selbst erfahren, wie gründlich ein Mensch sich wandeln kann” (18: 211). As aging adults, they acknowledge the unpleasant history of their past relations and nevertheless strive to form a more amiable bond of sincere friendship. Paul doubts Tulla’s capacity to love “überhaupt jemanden,” but her anxious and guilty interaction with Jenny indicates her progress towards caring for people. Their formerly complimentary relationship illustrates that change is possible, that people are not immutably nor inherently evil, and that two opposing people (such as the villain and the victim) can overcome their differences and live peacefully together.

CONCLUSION

Tulla's character in *Katz und Maus*, *Hundejahre*, and *Im Krebsgang* resonates with that of some of the female figures in *Die Blechtrommel*. The least threatening female villain of these works is Maria Truczinski, who repeatedly rebuffs Oskar's sexual and marital advances, and who exploits male victims (such as her boss) through her sexuality. Tulla is also known to verbally abuse her victims, as when she drives Amsel from the courtyard with the racial slur, "Itzich." Similar to Maria's tendency to use her sexuality for her benefit, Tulla also uses her sexuality to accomplish her goals as an adolescent and later as an adult, especially as she endeavors to conceive a child. However, Maria does not share Tulla's yearning to conceive a child; unlike Tulla's practical view of coitus, Maria's affair with Alfred Matzerath seems motivated by avidity for self-gratification. In addition, Maria is not responsible for the deaths of any persons who associate with her. Apart from minor differences, both Tulla and Maria share the similar characteristic of transcending their handicaps and asserting their authority over man.

Like Susi Kater, Tulla plays the role of seductress, though she is aiming more specifically to conceive a child and not just to encourage the "Serumspender" (3: 161). Tulla even plays a game with Harry, which is similar to the *Arzt-Patient* game played by Susi in the cellar (3: 161; 5: 323). Further, Susi and Tulla both force victims to ingest concoctions with unappetizing ingredients (3: 121-2; 5: 338). Although neither figure permanently injures a victim physically through these concoctions, both demonstrate their dominating personalities through their ability to manipulate others and enforce their

objectives despite the objections of their victims.

Tulla's association with death (illustrated by her influence in the cases of Oswald Brunies, Harras, and her miscarriage) resembles the lethal influence of the inanimate Niobe figurehead. Like Niobe, Tulla does not physically slay her victims with a weapon; but both are still responsible for the deaths of their victims. Niobe's sinister, sexual, and supernatural influence incites her victim's to take their own lives, and Tulla's malicious and reckless behavior is the underlying cause for the eventual deaths of her victims. Furthermore, Henri Plard suggests that the wooden and unfeeling figurehead's relationship to her impassioned victims parallels Tulla's nocuous relationship with Jenny, although this parallel becomes less clear in light of the developments in their relationship in *Krebsgang*.⁷⁰

In *Die Blechtrommel*, the Schwarze Köchin functions primarily as a mental or psychological manifestation evoking feelings of guilt and fear of reprisal. Tulla Pokriefke also manages to arouse feelings of guilt in her victims, as when she asks Joachim Mahlke, "mußte das denn beichten?" after his display of onanism (4: 42). In *Krebsgang*, she endeavors to convince her son to write an account of the *Gustloff* tragedy, often resorting to manipulation by reprehending his procrastination and negligence in writing the account for her: "Biste ons schuldig als glücklich Ieberlebender" (18: 31). However, Tulla is much more complex and develops to a greater extent than the Schwarze Köchin, who remains permanently the intangible and imaginary conveyor of guilt and fear. As a physical figure, Tulla engages in physical acts that hurt others physically and

⁷⁰ Plard 286. As discussed in the preceding chapter, Tulla and Jenny now enjoy a closer, friendlier relationship.

emotionally. For instance, when Jenny struggles to rise after stumbling during her ballet performance in the snow, Tulla shoves her to the ground, rolls her into a snowman, and leaves her symbolically to die (5: 278-80). Like the Schwarze Köchin, Tulla compels her victims or others acquainted with her to confront their guilt and responsibility. (She viciously demonstrates Studienrat Brunies' delinquency in *Hundejahre*, and she serves as a catalyst of guilt in *Krebsgang* by disseminating through her grandson the tale of the *Wilhelm Gustloff* tragedy.) Nevertheless, Tulla's role as a female villain is more complex due to her ability to interact directly with other figures.

Luzie Rennwand is perhaps the most similar to Tulla Pokriefke. Physically, both figures possess a triangular face.⁷¹ In addition, both have a connection with Störtebeker, the leader of the Duster gang, and both are “sort of” or “halb und halb” members of the Duster gang since they are not intimately involved in each activity (3: 151-2, 4: 111, 151-2; 5: 392, 428). Also, in one of Grass's later works, *Die Rättin*, the reappearing figure of Oskar Matzerath of *Die Blechtrommel* further establishes her association with Störtebeker and the Stäuberbande; indeed, he purports that Tulla Pokriefke and Luzie Rennwand are one and the same: “Die kleine Pokriefke, ein Luder besonderer Art, wurde Tulla gerufen, war aber auch unter dem Decknamen Luzie Rennwand bekannt.” (11: 91). The much older (and possibly senile or delusional) Oskar claims that Tulla is “ein mir bis heute gewärtiger Schrecken,” which reflects his sentiments about Luzie in *Die Blechtrommel*: “Mein Entsetzen heißt dann: Jetzt kommt Luzie Rennwand und fordert dich als Kinderschreck und Schwarze Köchin letztmals zum Sprung auf” (3: 507; 11: 91). The

⁷¹ See 3: 494, 500, 501, 504, 507, 553, 561, 778; 5: 167.

Luzie Rennwand and Tulla Pokriefke figures merge into the now concrete and physical manifestation of the Schwarze Köchin, the agent of guilt and conveyor of guilt's associated angst. Notwithstanding her role as the Schwarze Köchin, the Luzie-Tulla figure also enjoys the much broader role of the female villain in these works.

The female villain is not confined to just the four works discussed in this thesis. A figure in another of Grass's works deserves brief attention, due to the remarkable similarities that she shares with other villain figures. This figure is Vero Lewand of *örtlich betäubt*, who does not present any insurmountable obstacles that hinder the teacher, Eberhard Starusch, in his goals, but like a "Splitter im Fleisch," she has the potential to fester and cause an infection if she is not kept under control. In other words, she threatens his authority as a wise, experienced school teacher, his job security, and his reputation.

Specifically, Vero Lewand repeatedly warns Eberhard Starusch to stop discouraging "Flip" (Philipp) from implementing his anti-Vietnam protest, and she successfully seduces him one evening (6: 228-30). Like the other villain figures, especially Tulla Pokriefke, she is persistent and uses her sexuality to achieve her objectives. (According to Keele, Vero Lewand is a "reincarnation of the seductive Tulla Pokriefke, that dog-killing Black Cook figure from the Danzig Trilogy.")⁷² Indeed, Vero's method of coercing Starusch to sleep with her resembles Tulla's temptation of Mahlke on the minesweeper. Performing various reptilian contortions, Tulla pressures Mahlke: "Kannste das auch? Mach doch mal. Oder kannst du das nicht? Darfst du nicht?" (4:

⁷² Keele 105.

39-40). Similar to Tulla's reptilian movements, Vero Lewand writhes on the ground, coils up like a snake, and tries to entice Starusch with almost identical accusations: "Sie wälzte sich komisch und ungelernt auf dem Teppich und sagte drollige Sachen: 'Wollen Sie nicht auch, Old Hardy? Sie trauen sich ja nicht?...'"" and "Sie kugelte sich: 'Na los doch, Old Hardy! Oder können Sie nicht?'" (6: 228-9). Both question the virility and morality of their targets as a manipulative means of accomplishing their designs, and both succeed. However, while Tulla manages to overpower Mahlke's will, Vero Lewand demonstrates her ability to both overpower the Studienrat's willpower and subject him to her demands, if he intends to maintain his reputation and his position at the Gymnasium.

Aside from similar physical characteristics, such as their nasal voices, and their unyielding attitudes even after physical abuse, both Tulla Pokriefke and Vero Lewand utilize their sexuality to obtain an advantage over their victims, and both pose as threats to man's authority and physical safety.⁷³ As illustrated in the preceding chapters, Tulla, Vero, and other villain figures differ substantially from those women who, according to Beauvoir, are held captive by their physical handicaps and submit to the societal conventions that enforce woman's inferior status. Figures like Ulla the Muse, Schwester Agnete, Lina Greff, and Jenny Brunies tend to be submissive to man's authority; they do little to overcome their natural handicaps of physical inferiority or the societal conventions dictating their status in life. If a woman, such as Lina Greff, does challenge a societal expectation, the woman nevertheless poses no threat to man or his position.

⁷³ For references to the nasal qualities of their voices, see 4: 39; 5: 182; 6: 148,227. For references to their reactions to physical abuse, see 4: 40; 5: 405-7; 6: 201-2.

Moreover, contrary to Beauvoir's final proposal, woman does not need to take man's position or become like man in order to achieve absoluteness as the One after having transcended her position as the Other.⁷⁴ Instead, some feminists argue that woman needs to define her identity on her own terms, and not with respect to man's history or status.⁷⁵ At the same time, it is amazing how those women who do resist the roles laid out for them by society are often vilified or slandered, which tragic consequence is evidenced as a cultural trace in Grass's works through his portrayals of the literary female villain. In a way, the so-called female villain is herself a persecuted victim of an apathetic, reluctantly-changing, patriarchal society. The female villains discussed in this thesis have earned such a title through their personalities and deeds. In these works, they threaten man's supposed, inviolable position and physical condition, and they have done this by transcending their natural handicaps and the restraints of societal conventions.

However, contrary to some opinions, Tulla Pokriefke, Luzie Rennwand, and other villains do not represent the abstract concept of evil in and of itself, although their deeds may be deemed evil.⁷⁶ In the meantime, a villain is not doomed to a state of perpetual evil, but as illustrated in *Krebsgang*, she possesses the capacity to change. Although Tulla remains manipulative, domineering, and prejudiced, she only indirectly causes the death of Wolfgang Stremplin, which is an improvement from her direct involvement with persecution and death in *Hundejahre*, when she symbolically kills Jenny Brunies and

⁷⁴ For a contemporary discussion of Beauvoir's position on woman, see Céline T. Léon, "Beauvoir's Woman: Eunuch or Male?" *Feminist Interpretations of Simone de Beauvoir*, Ed. Margaret A. Simons (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State UP, 1995): 137-59.

⁷⁵ Léon 137-59.

⁷⁶ Keele 150.

persecutes Eddie Amsel. Furthermore, she does not physically or mentally attack and injure her opponents as she might have at a younger age, even though her anti-Semitic sentiments remain (18: 106, 181-2). She even seems to express a form of affection for her former victim, Jenny Brunies. The Luzie-Tulla figure was once a horrific terror to her victims, but she nevertheless possesses the capacity to change and cast off some of those characteristics that have contributed to her villainous reputation.

These works by Grass depict the tales of villains and victims, but the later work *Im Krebsgang* also suggests that such roles are not static. A villain might not permanently remain a villain, but might even assume the role of victim according to changing contexts. In *Krebsgang*, this impermanent villain-victim polarity is illustrated by the destruction of the *Wilhelm Gustloff* and the victimization of German refugees who were once the perpetrators of inhumane persecution and racial extermination.⁷⁷ In a similar manner, Grass seems to suggest, through Paul Pokriefke's comments about the Israeli-Palestinian situation, that former victims might eventually take on the role of villain (18: 118, 159, 196). Indeed, Stuart Taberner contends that the villain-victim duality, as depicted in *Krebsgang* and other works by Grass, is not an either-or condition, but that individuals and entities can be villain and victim simultaneously.⁷⁸ Tulla Pokriefke as an individual has experienced this victimization through the continual depictions of her as an animal in *Katz und Maus* and *Hundejahre*, and through Paul Pokriefke's persistent accusations of her guilt (among others, by drawing attention to her fox pelt). By using

⁷⁷ Elizabeth Dye, "'Weil die Geschichte nicht aufhört': Günter Grass's *Im Krebsgang*." *German Life and Letters* 57 (2004): 472-3, 477.

⁷⁸ Stuart Taberner, "'Normalization' and the New Consensus on the Nazi Past: Günter Grass's *Im Krebsgang* and the Problem of German Wartime Suffering." *Oxford German Studies* (2002): 171, 181-4.

Tulla and other villains as scapegoat figures, the other figures more easily maintain their own innocence and freedom from responsibility.

On a more universal level, Tulla Pokriefke does not only represent the female villain in these works, but she also represents a people who at one time perpetuated great evils. Like Tulla, these people might have been responsible for delinquent deeds, and they might have once injured or destroyed innocent victims, but now they regret what they have done. Tulla Pokriefke might represent National Socialist zealots, neo-Nazis, United States warmongers, or Israeli authorities, or whoever else might have been complicit in the horrible tragedies of the past or the continuing atrocities of the present. Representing the victims of these tragedies, Jenny herself has forgiven her persecutor and come to terms with what happened in the past. She cannot be reunited with her original family or her adoptive father, Oswald Brunies, but she can nevertheless find peace and comfort, and even befriend the person who has wronged her, Tulla Pokriefke. The story of Jenny and Tulla, though fictional, still points to the hope that villain and victim might one day live together in peace.

Grass's speech "Rede von der Gewöhnung" is still relevant to the present day, as depicted in *Im Krebsgang*, as the Tulla and Jenny figures struggle to find peace and harmony. In this speech, Grass relates a fictive tale centered on three persons, Dieter, Ben and Hermann Mautler. Dieter and Ben represent the Nazi soldier and the displaced Jewish survivor, respectively. The third figure, Hermann Mautler, plays the role of mediator as he undertakes to educate Ben and Dieter about their prejudices against the other. However, as Grass relates, Mautler is astonished to see his two students, both still mutually antagonistic, unite and strive to foil his efforts to educate them. Their

motivation for “hating” him and refusing to cooperate is that Mautler, in spite of his sincere intentions and higher education, could not empathize with them or comprehend what each had experienced either in the concentration camp or during the costly *Ardennenoffensiv (Battle of the Bulge)*. The decisive obstacle impeding Mautler’s success as an educator is “die blinde amoralische Realität mit ihren elementaren Interessen” (14: 230). But Grass insists that Mautler did not necessarily fail in his efforts to educate Ben and Dieter. “Die Vernunft führt keine Blitzkriege;” asserts Grass, “ihre Taten schlagen nicht augenblicks in Erfolge um. Langsam wirkt die Vernunft” (14: 230).

Even today, extremism cannot be overcome with sudden and arbitrary prohibitions against radical groups, says Grass in an interview.⁷⁹ He considers overt and indirect forms of education to be a more effective means of mitigating the troubles of these times, spawned by such extremists. As illustrated by his tale of Ben and Dieter, the process of education should be gradual, and sympathetic to the experiences of both villains and victims. Grass points to his writing as one means of such education. Peter O. Arnds elaborates:

Grass understands that the suppression of any aspect of this fateful chapter in German history may ultimately have pernicious consequences. Suppress the memory of the Holocaust victims, and nationalism and neo-Nazism may easily reise again, but if you suppress the memory and mourning of

⁷⁹ Günter Grass, Interview, “In meiner Geschichte findet der immerwährende Untergang der ‘Gustloff’ im Internet statt” (Göttingen: Steidl, 2002).

German victims, the same might happen, as *Im Krebsgang* makes abundantly clear.⁸⁰

As suggested in Grass's narrative, the Tulla and Jenny of our time will not likely forsake their differences or prejudices immediately due to the interference of a third-party mediator who has no way to comprehend the true nature of their experiences. On the other hand, a third-party mediator who is sincerely interested in their welfare, and who has invested time and effort to learn from them and and strives to acknowledge their experiences, will have more success in reconstructing their views and preventing the rise of further prejudice. Moreover, because the symbolic Tulla and Jenny entities are not inherently evil, but are capable of revising their views and changing their behavior, though it might take decades, the hope exists that they will eventually reconcile their differences and learn to live together as friends, perhaps with even the same kind of affection exhibited by Tulla and Jenny at the conclusion of *Im Krebsgang*.

⁸⁰ Peter O. Arnds, *Representation, Subversion, and Eugenics in Günter Grass's The Tin Drum* (New York: Camden House, 2004) 154.

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