

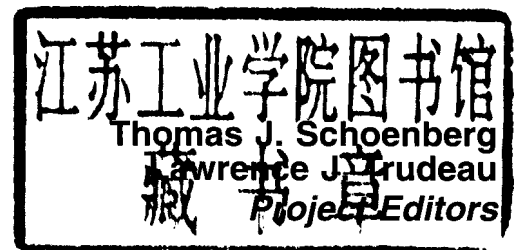
Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism

TCLC 185

Volume 185

Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism

**Criticism of the
Works of Novelists, Poets, Playwrights,
Short Story Writers, and Other Creative Writers
Who Lived between 1900 and 1999,
from the First Published Critical
Appraisals to Current Evaluations**



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Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism, Vol. 185

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Preface

Since its inception *Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism* (TCLC) has been purchased and used by some 10,000 school, public, and college or university libraries. TCLC has covered more than 1000 authors, representing over 60 nationalities and nearly 50,000 titles. No other reference source has surveyed the critical response to twentieth-century authors and literature as thoroughly as TCLC. In the words of one reviewer, “there is nothing comparable available.” TCLC “is a gold mine of information—dates, pseudonyms, biographical information, and criticism from books and periodicals—which many librarians would have difficulty assembling on their own.”

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TCLC is designed to serve as an introduction to authors who died between 1900 and 1999 and to the most significant interpretations of these author’s works. Volumes published from 1978 through 1999 included authors who died between 1900 and 1960. The great poets, novelists, short story writers, playwrights, and philosophers of the period are frequently studied in high school and college literature courses. In organizing and reprinting the vast amount of critical material written on these authors, TCLC helps students develop valuable insight into literary history, promotes a better understanding of the texts, and sparks ideas for papers and assignments. Each entry in TCLC presents a comprehensive survey on an author’s career or an individual work of literature and provides the user with a multiplicity of interpretations and assessments. Such variety allows students to pursue their own interests; furthermore, it fosters an awareness that literature is dynamic and responsive to many different opinions.

Every fourth volume of TCLC is devoted to literary topics. These topics widen the focus of the series from the individual authors to such broader subjects as literary movements, prominent themes in twentieth-century literature, literary reaction to political and historical events, significant eras in literary history, prominent literary anniversaries, and the literatures of cultures that are often overlooked by English-speaking readers.

TCLC is designed as a companion series to Thomson Gale’s *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, (CLC) which reprints commentary on authors who died after 1999. Because of the different time periods under consideration, there is no duplication of material between CLC and TCLC.

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A TCLC entry consists of the following elements:

- The **Author Heading** cites the name under which the author most commonly wrote, followed by birth and death dates. Also located here are any name variations under which an author wrote, including transliterated forms for authors whose native languages use nonroman alphabets. If the author wrote consistently under a pseudonym, the pseudonym is listed in the author heading and the author’s actual name is given in parenthesis on the first line of the biographical and critical information. Uncertain birth or death dates are indicated by question marks. Single-work entries are preceded by a heading that consists of the most common form of the title in English translation (if applicable) and the name of its author.
- The **Introduction** contains background information that introduces the reader to the author, work, or topic that is the subject of the entry.
- The list of **Principal Works** is ordered chronologically by date of first publication and lists the most important works by the author. The genre and publication date of each work is given. In the case of foreign authors whose

works have been translated into English, the English-language version of the title follows in brackets. Unless otherwise indicated, dramas are dated by first performance, not first publication. Lists of **Representative Works** by different authors appear with topic entries.

- Reprinted **Criticism** is arranged chronologically in each entry to provide a useful perspective on changes in critical evaluation over time. The critic's name and the date of composition or publication of the critical work are given at the beginning of each piece of criticism. Unsigned criticism is preceded by the title of the source in which it originally appeared. All titles by the author featured in the text are printed in boldface type. Footnotes are reprinted at the end of each essay or excerpt. In the case of excerpted criticism, only those footnotes that pertain to the excerpted texts are included. Criticism in topic entries is arranged chronologically under a variety of subheadings to facilitate the study of different aspects of the topic.
- A complete **Bibliographical Citation** of the original essay or book precedes each piece of criticism. Source citations in the Literary Criticism Series follow University of Chicago Press style, as outlined in *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003).
- Critical essays are prefaced by brief **Annotations** explicating each piece.
- An annotated bibliography of **Further Reading** appears at the end of each entry and suggests resources for additional study. In some cases, significant essays for which the editors could not obtain reprint rights are included here. Boxed material following the further reading list provides references to other biographical and critical sources on the author in series published by Thomson Gale.

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A **Cumulative Author Index** lists all of the authors that appear in a wide variety of reference sources published by Thomson Gale, including *TCLC*. A complete list of these sources is found facing the first page of the Author Index. The index also includes birth and death dates and cross references between pseudonyms and actual names.

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An alphabetical **Title Index** accompanies each volume of *TCLC*. Listings of titles by authors covered in the given volume are followed by the author's name and the corresponding page numbers where the titles are discussed. English translations of foreign titles and variations of titles are cross-referenced to the title under which a work was originally published. Titles of novels, dramas, nonfiction books, and poetry, short story, or essay collections are printed in italics, while individual poems, short stories, and essays are printed in roman type within quotation marks.

In response to numerous suggestions from librarians, Thomson Gale also produces a paperbound edition of the *TCLC* cumulative title index. This annual cumulation, which alphabetically lists all titles reviewed in the series, is available to all customers. Additional copies of this index are available upon request. Librarians and patrons will welcome this separate index; it saves shelf space, is easy to use, and is recyclable upon receipt of the next edition.

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Heinrich Böll

1917-1985

(Full name Heinrich Theodor Böll; also transliterated as Boell) German novelist, short fiction writer, playwright, essayist, translator, autobiographer, poet, travel writer, and editor.

The following entry provides an overview of Böll's life and works. For additional information on his career, see *CLC*, Volumes 2, 3, 6, 9, 11, 15, 27, 32, and 72.

INTRODUCTION

Sometimes called the “conscience of the German nation,” Heinrich Böll is best known for his short stories and novels, which depict the horror of war and the devastation of German society in the post-World War II era. The central concern of Böll's early work was exposing the reality of the Nazi regime and refuting the propagandistic glorification of military power. In the aftermath of World War II, he used his fiction to both rail against the materialism and hypocrisy that pervaded German society and urge the German people not to forget the atrocities of the past. Despite being raised in a devout Catholic family, Böll also criticized the Catholic Church for its collusion with the German government before and after Adolf Hitler's rise to power. Böll has been praised for his nonconformist themes and his concise literary style, which has been compared to the writing of Ernest Hemingway. He was one of the most popular writers of his time and gained international attention when he won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1972. Critic Arrigo Subiotto has argued that “Böll had the knack of capturing and even anticipating the temper of the time.” Subiotto concluded that, perhaps more than any other German writer, his work “caught the mood of confusion and privation of the immediate post-war world.”

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Böll was born December 21, 1917, in Cologne, Germany, where he lived with his family during the years of World War I, the Great Depression, and Adolf Hitler's rise to power. He was raised Catholic, although his parents never forced him to join the church. Böll began attending a Catholic elementary school in 1924, then later studied at Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gymnasium. During this time, he became interested in literature and read

Charles Dickens and Honoré de Balzac, as well as Heinrich Kleist and Friedrich Hebbel, German playwrights after whom he modeled his writing. In 1937, Böll graduated from school and began working in a bookstore, where he first encountered the writings of Sigmund Freud and Karl Marx. After completing his compulsory labor service between 1938 and 1939, he enrolled at the University of Cologne to study classical philology and literature, but his studies were interrupted and, in 1939, he was called into military service for an eight-week training course. In September of that year, World War II began, and Böll was called to active duty. He served in France, Poland, the Crimea, and Romania. He was wounded several times, the last of which kept him in a hospital in Hungary until August 1944. By this time, Böll had become an outspoken critic of the war, and he deserted the German army in early 1945. In the chaos of the final days of the war, Böll was able to rejoin the army in time to be taken prisoner by the Americans, thus ensuring that he would receive an honorable military discharge. He was imprisoned in France and Belgium from April 1945 until the following autumn.

After his release, Böll returned to Cologne and discovered that his early attempts at writing, including the drafts of six novels, had been destroyed during the war. In 1947, he published his first short story, “Die Botschaft” (“Breaking the News”), and two years later *Der Zug war pünktlich* (*The Train Was on Time*), his first novella. Böll's early work reflected his experiences in the war. In the short stories of *Wanderer, kommst du nach Spa . . .* (1950; *Traveller, If You Come to Spa*) and the longer works *The Train Was on Time* and *Wo warst du, Adam?* (1951; *Adam, Where Art Thou?*), Böll emphasized the stark realism of war and the boredom of military life, while the popular literature of the time offered propaganda, proclaiming the heroism and gallantry of combat. During the 1960s and 1970s, Böll examined the social and economic development of post-war German culture in his writings. In two of his best-known novels, *Ansichten eines Clowns* (1963; *The Clown*) and *Gruppenbild mit Dame* (1971; *Group Portrait with Lady*), Böll exposed the hypocrisy of the Catholic Church and the dehumanizing effects of capitalist society. In 1972, the same year he received the Nobel Prize for Literature, Böll published an article in the German newspaper *Der Spiegel* that protested the media's treatment of the terrorist Baader-Meinhof gang and defended their right to due process. Böll became a public target after the article was published and was ac-

cused of promoting terrorism. In response to the events, he wrote *Die verlorene Ehre der Katharina Blum* (1974; *The Lost Honor of Katharina Blum*), a novella denouncing slander. Because of Böll's continued political involvement during this time, he was often placed under police surveillance. He continued to write until his death, on July 16, 1985. His last novel, *Frauen vor Flußlandschaft* (*Women in a River Landscape*), was published posthumously in August of that same year.

MAJOR WORKS

The Clown is one of Böll's most controversial books and is regarded by some critics as his greatest work of the 1960s. Written as a first-person narrative, *The Clown* presents an ironic and satirical critique of postwar West German society and the Catholic Church. The story revolves around a twenty-seven-year-old protagonist, Hans Schnier, who forsakes the wealthy lifestyle of his parents to become a clown. Maria, Hans's former girlfriend, has left him to marry a devout Catholic. Through various telephone conversations, Hans discovers that Maria is on her honeymoon, and he decides that he will sing religious songs dressed as a clown at the railroad station until she returns. Hans has a different worldview from the rest of society. For example, he believes that all that is required for marriage is the mutual consent of the participants, rather than a church ceremony. The hypocrisy and materialism of postwar German society is an important issue in the novel. While Hans cherishes his relationship with his sister, who died in the war, his mother, though still living, is "dead" to him because of her eagerness to forget the past and benefit financially from the new social climate. *The Clown* has often been compared to J. D. Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye* (1951) because of its straightforward narrative style and the similarities between Holden Caulfield, Salinger's protagonist, and Hans.

Many critics consider Böll's novel *Group Portrait with Lady* his most accomplished work. The book's heroine, Leni Pfeiffer, lives with her son Lev in an apartment in Cologne that is owned by her relatives. She joins the other tenants in preventing her relatives from tearing the building down. The formal structure of the novel is dictated by a series of monologues written from the perspective of Leni's various acquaintances. Through these monologues the "pure" nature of Leni's character emerges. As the novel progresses, it is also revealed that Leni was once in love with Boris, a Russian prisoner of war during World War II, and that Lev is their son. In the novel, Böll emphasizes the integrity of the couple's affair and the pettiness of society's reaction to Lev's illegitimate birth. Like much of Böll's later work, the major theme of *Group Portrait with Lady* is the dehumanizing effects of capitalism. The characters of Leni

and Lev are thought to embody Böll's principle of "Leistungsverweigerung," or rejection of the work ethic, which countered the prevailing materialism of the time.

Although much of Böll's work is concerned specifically with the effects of World War II on German society, he also wrote about universal social problems. His novella *The Lost Honor of Katharina Blum* focuses on issues of media manipulation and slander, which Böll described as a type of "public violence." Katharina, a frugal housekeeper, falls in love with a political activist, who deserts the army. She harbors him in her apartment and later allows him to escape. Her reputation is tarnished when the newspapers publish an unfounded article naming the man as a terrorist, and Katharina, his accomplice. The paper fabricates and publishes details about her love life. Since she is tried in the newspapers rather than a court of law, Katharina believes she has no option but to resort to violence to restore her lost honor. Thus, she shoots the journalist who is responsible for writing the articles and destroying her reputation.

CRITICAL RECEPTION

Böll was both a popular and controversial writer during his lifetime. Worldwide, his books have sold more than thirty million copies and have been translated into forty-three languages. In Germany he is among the most recognizable figures in that nation's postwar literature, along with Günter Grass. Within the critical community, Böll has been praised for his simple and spare literary style, and for his unflinching portrayal of the effects of war and capitalist society on the "common man." He has also been lauded for his keen perception of the absurdity of life and his skillful use of satire in his fiction—qualities perhaps best exemplified in his early short story collections, *Traveller, If You Come to Spa* and *18 Stories* (1966). Whereas some critics have faulted his simple prose and considered him a mediocre stylist, others have maintained that Böll's concise prose was a direct protest against the highly stylized and overly complex writings of classical German literature, comparing his work to that of the American Ernest Hemingway. Generally, Böll is credited, along with Grass, with revitalizing German literature after World War II. In his influential 1996 study of Böll's aesthetics, Frank Finlay argued that "a major preoccupation of Böll in the immediate post-war period was to restore humanity to the poisoned linguistic landscape, which was one of the legacies of the Third Reich."

Because of the strict ethical and moral code in his writings, as well as his concern with social, political, and religious issues throughout his career, Böll is most often appraised as a writer of historical significance, a fact reflected in his popular assessment as the "con-

science of the German nation." As Finlay noted, the persistent trend in Böll criticism is to view the author "primarily as the literary chronicler of West German history," and to praise his works "for the moral commitment which they express, and for the extent to which they illuminate the post-war West German context." The attempt to assess Böll's canon—to interpret his themes and delineation of character—within the context of postwar West German society can be seen in many studies of Böll. For example, writing in 1973, Robert A. Burns claimed that "the main aim of Böll's work is to fight for real morality in its continual struggle with the spurious morality of mere conformism." And in his 1994 study, Michael Butler asserted, "In his fiction Böll stubbornly set out to create models of resistance against contemporary orthodoxies. . . . In doing so, he proved to be hostile not to progress as such, but to the narrow and debased concept of progress which has dominated most of the twentieth century and, in particular, post-1945 Germany." While some critics have posited that Böll's adherence to his moral agenda caused him to sacrifice artistry in his fiction, others have praised the marriage of theme and formal construction in such works as *Group Portrait with Lady* and *The Lost Honor of Katharina Blum*. Despite their disagreements, most critics concur that Böll made significant contributions to postwar German literature and exerted a strong influence on public thought. As Robert C. Conard concluded in his 1992 book, *Understanding Heinrich Böll*, "Böll's life's work addresses the concerns of an age with clarity, historical awareness, and moral vision. Human affairs in a broad sense concerned him. He left his mark on postwar Germany as no other writer was able to do. . . . From 1960 to 1985, the year of his death, Böll was the dominant force in German intellectual public life. For this reason future literary historians may justly be able to call these twenty-five years of German literature the Age of Heinrich Böll."

PRINCIPAL WORKS

Der Zug war pünktlich [*The Train Was on Time*] (novella) 1949
Wanderer, kommst du nach Spa . . . [*Traveller, If You Come to Spa*] (short stories) 1950
Wo warst du, Adam? [*Adam, Where Art Thou?*] (novel) 1951
Nicht nur zur Weihnachtszeit (short stories) 1952
Und sagte kein einziges Wort [*Acquainted with the Night*] (novel) 1953
Haus ohne Hüter [*Tomorrow and Yesterday*] (novel) 1954
Das Brot der frühen Jahre [*The Bread of Our Early Years*] (novella) 1955

So ward Abend und Morgen (short stories) 1955
Als der Krieg ausbrach [*Enter and Exit*] (novellas) 1956; also published as *Als der Krieg ausbrach; Als der Krieg zu Ende war: Zwei Erzählungen*, 1962
Unberechenbare Gäste (short stories) 1956
Abenteuer eines Brotbeutels, und andere Geschichten [edited by Richard Plant] (short stories) 1957
Irishes Tagebuch [*Irish Journal*] (travelogue) 1957
Im Tal der donnernden Hufe (novella) 1957
Doktor Murkes gesammeltes Schweigen, und andere Satiren (short stories) 1958
Der Wegwerfer (novella) 1958
Der Bahnhof von Zimpfen (short stories) 1959
Billard um halb zehn [*Billiards at Half-Past Nine*] (novel) 1959
Der Mann mit den Messern (short stories) 1959
Die Waage der Baleks, und andere Erzählungen (short stories) 1959
Ein Schluck Erde (play) 1962
1947 bis 1951 (short stories) 1963
Ansichten eines Clowns [*The Clown*] (novel) 1963
Die Essenholer, und andere Erzählungen (short stories) 1963
Entfernung von der Truppe [*Absent without Leave*] (novella) 1964
18 Stories (short stories) 1966
Ende einer Dienstreise [*End of a Mission*] (novella) 1966
Children Are Civilians, Too (short stories) 1970
Gruppenbild mit Dame [*Group Portrait with Lady*] (novel) 1971
Erzählungen, 1950-1970 (short stories) 1972
Die verlorene Ehre der Katharina Blum; oder, Wie Gewalt entstehen und wohin sie führen kann [*The Lost Honor of Katharina Blum: How Violence Develops and Where It Can Lead*] (novella) 1974
Heinrich Böll Werke: Romane und Erzählungen, 1947-1977. 5 vols. [edited by Bernd Balzer] (novels, novellas, and short stories) 1977
Missing Persons, and Other Essays (essays) 1977
Du fährst zu oft nach Heidelberg, und andere Erzählungen (short stories) 1979
Fürsorgliche Belagerung [*The Safety Net*] (novel) 1979
Heinrich Böll Werke: Essayistische Schriften und Reden. 3 vols. [edited by Bernd Balzer] (essays, reviews, and speeches) 1979
Heinrich Böll Werke: Hoerspiele, Theaterstücke, Drehbuecher, Gedichte [edited by Bernd Balzer] (plays, radio plays, and screenplays) 1979
Heinrich Böll Werke: Interviews [edited by Bernd Balzer] (interviews) 1979
Gesammelte Erzählungen. 2 vols. (short stories) 1981
Was soll aus dem Jungen bloß werden?; oder, Irgendwas mit Büchern [*What's to Become of the Boy? or, Something to Do with Books*] (autobiography) 1981
**Der Vermächtnis* [*A Soldier's Legacy*] (novel) 1982
Der Angriff: Erzählungen, 1947-1949 (short stories) 1983

Die schwarzen Schafe: Erzählungen, 1950-1952 (short stories) 1983

Die Verwundung, und andere frühe Erzählungen [*The Casualty*] (short stories) 1983

Veränderungen in Staech: Erzählungen, 1962-1980 (short stories) 1984

Frauen vor Flußlandschaft: Roman in Dialogen und Selbstgesprächen [*Women in a River Landscape*] (novel) 1985

Heinrich Böll als Lyriker (poetry) 1985

The Stories of Heinrich Böll (short stories) 1986

Der Engel schweig [*The Silent Angel*] (novel) 1992

Der blasse Hund: Erzählungen [*The Mad Dog*] (short stories) 1995

*This work was written in 1948.

CRITICISM

W. A. Coupe (essay date April 1964)

SOURCE: Coupe, W. A. "Heinrich Böll's *Und sagte kein einziges Wort*—An Analysis." *German Life & Letters* 17 n.s., no. 3 (April 1964): 238-49.

[In the following essay, Coupe discusses Böll's treatment of Christianity and the devastation of a post-war society in his novel *Acquainted with the Night*.]

Und sagte kein einziges Wort in many respects represents an obvious and natural continuation of the war stories which constituted the bulk of Heinrich Böll's work before 1953. The main characteristic of these stories is the uncompromisingly negative view of war which Böll adopts: blind, anonymous forces seize on the individual and hound him to his destruction; nor is there in the individual's struggle with his fate anything sublime or ennobling—indeed, most of Böll's heroes are, from the start, pathetically aware of the pointlessness of any such struggle and accept their fate with sheep-like meekness. War negates human values and there is no escape from its horrors, save in the acceptance of the final negation represented by death: Andreas in *Der Zug war pünktlich*, although intensely aware of his impending doom, cannot simply change trains and so avoid his fate, any more than Feinhals and Feldweibel Schneider can achieve safety under their flags of truce in *Wo warst du, Adam?* In *Und sagte kein einziges Wort* we are shown how the havoc of war did not cease once the fighting had stopped: the novelist of the obscure 'Landser' has become the novelist of the poor proletarian and the protest against those forces which in war-time combine to violate the sanctity of the

individual has been translated into criticism of the materialism of post-war society which in its own way negates human values in equally vicious fashion.

Fred and Käte Bogner are monuments of the spiritual and material distress which the Second World War has left in its train. In the bombing they have lost their home and most of their material possessions, and subsequently two of their children. Always a drifter without proper profession or ambition, Fred has brought back from the war a heightened sense of the futility of existence and a colossal indifference to all those things that other men are determined to take seriously. Unable to face the wretchedness of life with Käte and their three surviving children in a one-roomed flat, where they are exposed to the manifold inconveniences of extreme overcrowding and the petty persecutions of their immediate neighbour, Frau Franke, Fred has left home, preferring to sleep in doss-houses, railway waiting-rooms and in the houses of friends rather than stay at home and be reduced to a state of extreme nervous exhaustion and frustration by the conditions under which his family is forced to live. He continues to send his wife the wages he earns as a telephonist and to meet her at week-ends, but otherwise he spends his time drinking spirits, gambling or wandering through the cemeteries which hold a peculiar fascination for him. In the novel we are shown the week-end which precipitates a new crisis in the lives of the Bogners and produces a sort of solution. Fred and Käte meet on the Sunday afternoon and spend the night together in a cheap hotel. Discovering that she is pregnant again, Käte informs her husband that she is not prepared to continue to meet him in this fashion which denies the real meaning of their marriage and reduces her almost to the level of a prostitute, and on the Monday morning they part. Later the same morning, in the course of an errand in town for his employers, Fred happens to see his wife from a distance and the sight of her and the realization of what she means to him precipitates a nervous collapse on his part and his employers send him home to his wife and family.

On the immediate level the novel thus deals with the problems of a particular marriage in which the 'Zerstörungen in unserer Welt' of which Böll speaks in the essay *Bekenntnis zur Trümmerliteratur* are exemplified. The destruction of war lives on in the destruction of the Bogners' family life, in the wretchedness of their material conditions and the 'Knacks' which the war gave to Fred and which makes him incapable of facing up to those conditions. The Bogners' problem is hopeless in its simplicity: all that they need is a larger flat: 'aber für ein grössere Wohnung braucht man Geld, braucht man das, was sie Energie nennen, aber wir haben weder Geld noch Energie, auch meine Frau hat keine Energie' (p. 86). This is the central problem, apathy and a constitutional incapacity to grapple success-

fully with the hurly-burly of life in the post-war world, and Fred's return home, however much it may comfort Käte—and even that is problematic—will in no way affect this problem. No more than in the war stories can the concluding sentences be seen as a happy end. The 'tödliche Trostlosigkeit' of Fred's life will not be in any way changed; his wife will continue her hopeless struggle against the lime which crumbles from the walls of their flat and covers everything with the fine white 'Staub der Armut'; Frau Franke will continue to persecute them in her self-righteous fashion and the children will remain the meek candidates for the treadmill of life they have always been, 'eingespannt in den tödlichen Kreislauf, der mit dem Packen des Schulranzens anfängt und irgendwo auf dem Bürostuhl endet' (p. 13)—everything will in fact be just as before, except that the presence of a fourth child will make their living conditions just that little bit more unbearable. The aftermath of war will continue to exact its toll of human suffering from which, it appears, there is no escape this side of the grave.

But in spite of all the obvious similarities with Böll's earlier, and later, writings, *Und sagte kein einziges Wort* occupies a unique position in his work. Böll is a convinced Christian: it is on Christian grounds that he is so passionately opposed to war, just as it is on Christian grounds that he here and in subsequent novels protests against many social developments in post-war Germany. Yet, with the exception of one or two not very happy excursions into the hereafter—one thinks of stories such as *Wiedersehen mit Drüing* and *Die Essenholer*—this Christianity is nowhere expressed in specifically religious terms, but manifests itself as an implied ethical attitude with which believer and non-believer alike can agree. Only in *Und sagte kein einziges Wort* does Böll leave this neutral ground to produce a novel which is peculiarly Christian. This new, consciously Christian content is matched by a new development in form. By this I do not mean so much the obvious outward form of the novel—the alternating interior monologues by means of which the attitudes of the two protagonists to their marriage and to life in general are put before us—this was already anticipated to some degree in *Wo warst du, Adam?* and subsequently becomes standard technique in *Haus ohne Hüter* and *Billard um halb zehn*—but rather the inner form of the novel—the imposition on these interior monologues of a series of juxtaposed antithetical motifs which elevates the work from a simple social document and 'Eheroman' to the level of a twentieth-century *Pasional Christi und Antichristi*.

The key to the theological message of the novel is to be found in the two texts which the parish priest of the Church of the Seven Sorrows of Mary offers as a solace to the distraught Käte in the confessional: 'In der Welt habt ihr Angst, aber seid getrost, ich habe die Welt

überwunden' and 'Gehet ein durch die enge Pforte, denn weit ist das Tor und breit der Weg, der zum Verderben führt, und viele sind, die da eingehen. Wie eng ist die Pforte und wie schmal der Weg, der zum Leben führt, und nur wenige sind es, die ihn finden' (p. 102). Both these texts are intimately connected in their insistence on the antithesis between the world and God: the first points to the lot of the Christian in the world (the Authorized Version, John xvi. 33, renders 'Angst' by 'tribulation') and minimizes the importance of earthly existence in the light of Christ's victory over the world: the second, adapted from one of the sayings of the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. vii. 13) puts this antithesis in the context of the social teaching of Christ and reiterates the mutually exclusive nature of the claims which God and the world make upon the individual. For the true Christian earthly existence cannot be a pleasant experience, but ultimately the tribulations and suffering which are his lot in the world are the means whereby he becomes an inheritor of the kingdom of Heaven. Conversely, and here the context of the Sermon on the Mount is particularly significant, success in the world and material prosperity are a stumbling block to salvation, since they inevitably suborn the individual from the service of God to the service of Mammon. It is in the context of the marriage of Fred and Käte Bogner and their relationship with their environment that this fundamental teaching of Christ is worked out.

'In the world ye shall have tribulation', and the tribulations of the poor in spirit can take many forms: in the present case they are obviously exemplified by the wretchedness of the conditions under which the Bogners live, the constant struggle to make ends meet, the hostility of Frau Franke, Fred's disgust with life coupled with his self-torturing refusal to struggle against it, and Käte's fear of a new pregnancy, exacerbated by her husband's desertion of the family hearth. For the poor the world is a terrible place and fortunate are those who, like the twins Käte bore in the bombing, died young, 'weil sie vom Leben verschont geblieben sind' (p. 49). Just as death was the only possible escape from war, so too, it seems, is death the only possible escape from the tribulations of life: hence Fred's predilection for funerals and cemeteries. The brevity of human life is not a source of fear but of comfort: 'Es ist nicht für lange Zeit, dreissig, vierzig Jahre noch, und so lange müssen wir es aushalten' (p. 174). But in this 'aushalten' of Käte's lies a wealth of Christian meaning: the world is alienated from God and those who serve Him will necessarily find worldly existence rich in tribulations, but it is in our tribulations that God is working out His purpose, and for Käte Bogner and her husband the service of God consists precisely in this 'aushalten', for God himself in His great love has experienced and overcome tribulation and it is through love, both human and divine, that human beings may do likewise.