BROCH, MUSIL, CANETTI

Three Austrian Novelists of the 1930's.

MOTIFS OF CRIME AND MADNESS IN DIE SCHLAFWANDLER, DER MANN OHNE EIGENSCHAFTEN AND DIE BLENDUNG.

CONTENTS

Acknowledgement III
Statement IV
Abstract V
Note X

Introduction XI

CHAPTER ONE: The criminal motif in Broch's
Die Schlafwandler.
Pasenow: the uniform as judge 1
Esch: the obsession with justice 16
Huguenau: the criminal as value-free man 41

CHAPTER TWO: The function of the criminal in
Musil's Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften.
Moosbrugger: the criminal as a reflection of
society 57
Clarisse: the criminal as savior 69
Ulrich: the moral question 75
Ulrich and Agathe: "Die Verbrecher" 85

CHAPTER THREE: Crime and the criminal in
Canetti's Die Blendung.
The private world 110
The underworld 134
The forces of law 140
The devaluation of life 153

CHAPTER FOUR: The criminal motif. 158

CHAPTER FIVE: The function of insanity in
Broch's Die Schlafwandler.
The psychology of values 172
The insanity of value-fragmentation 184
Pasenow: the romantic psychological cycle 188
Esch: anarchy and 'Erlösungswahn' 209
Huguenau: crisis and the hope for recovery 219
Abstract

After a preliminary survey of critical opinion linking Elias Canetti with Hermann Broch and Robert Musil, this study examines the motifs of crime and insanity which play a significant role in their novels, Die Blendung, Die Schlafwandler and Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften respectively.

The first half of this examination, dealing with the criminal motif, begins with a discussion of Broch's Die Schlafwandler. In the first two sections of Broch's trilogy, references to crime demonstrate the relationship of the protagonists to the values of society, which are shown to be unrealistic and invalid.

Joachim von Pasenow condemns himself as a traitor and criminal because he is unable to live up to the rigid standards of his military code; Esch is obsessed with justice and order, attempting to free himself from the guilty society he is involved in, and to avenge both its wrongs and his own. The more extreme state of value loss in the third novel of the trilogy, Huguenau, is reflected in the protagonist's rejection of all moral standards; his act of murder represents complete freedom from the invalid codes of the past; but it is also shown to point forward to a potential reconstruction of values.

The criminal motif in Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften is centred on the figure of the murderer Moosbrugger. Moosbrugger's
position within the novel is analysed, to reveal that he reflects the latent violence of his society. Clarisse's obsession with Moosbrugger is discussed as the expression of a general dissatisfaction with prevailing values. In a different form, this dissatisfaction provides the basis for Ulrich's search for more valid moral criteria. This search involves the rejection of existing moral laws, and culminates in crime: the third volume of Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften is subtitled "Die Verbrecher", in reference to Ulrich and his sister Agathe. Agathe's crime of forging her father's will is presented as the starting point of an attempt to live according to inner convictions rather than external laws. Although their 'Utopia' does not succeed, their attempt stands as a positive foil to the negative portrayal of the existing society and its moral standards.

In Die Blende references to crime - in the fears, suspicions and hopes of the characters, as well as in actual crimes - reveal that each individual lives according to a private moral code, which he sees as giving him the right to pursue his own goals ruthlessly and with impunity. At the same time, he feels justified in condemning others to death if they stand in the way of his goals. All sectors of society are shown to conform to this pattern, which results in the complete devaluation of human life. The destructiveness of these private legal systems is not, within the novel, evaluated from the point of view of more valid moral
standards: Canetti's condemnation of the violently ego-
tistic values of his characters is simply revealed in
their grotesque consequences in the incidents of the novel.

The summarizing chapter, "The criminal motif", sets the
results of each individual study in the context of the other.
In particular, the relationship of the criminal figures to
the society depicted in each novel is examined: in each in-
stance the criminal is seen to be representative of his so-
ciety, rather than alien from it.

The utopian aspects of the criminal motif in Die Schlaf-
wandler and Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften - in portraying the
potential for new ethical values - form the basis for funda-
mental distinctions in the ultimate significance of the mo-
tif in each of the works discussed.

The motif of madness, examined in the latter section of this
study, runs parallel to the criminal motif in many respects.

Broch's theoretical works provide the frame of reference for
the discussion of Die Schlafwandler: Broch's theory of the
cycle of values and the accompanying psychological states -
in particular the concepts of value disintegration as neu-
rosis, false closed systems as psychosis, and alienation from
reality as insanity - are discussed in the opening section of
the chapter. These concepts are linked with the incidents and
images of the novel, to show how Broch, in many different
ways, depicts the breakdown of values through the psychological instability of his characters. The plots of Huguenau present the most extreme instances of these forms of madness, but also reveal the potential for the restoration of normality.

Moosbrugger is, again, the focal point for the image of madness in Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften. The major features of Moosbrugger's illness - the sense that the ego is threatened by external reality, and the opposite state of ecstatic communion with the world - recur in the incidents of intoxication depicted in the novel, which are equated with Moosbrugger's experiences through shared images. These incidents are presented as the result of the deficiencies of the age which is characterized as diffuse and aimless, and designated as insane. Clarisse's vision of redemption and her concept of delusion form one response to this general instability.

Ulrich and Agathe represent another response in their attempt to establish a 'second reality' as an alternative form of life. Their experiences are shown to be closely linked with the delusions of Moosbrugger and Clarisse: the tension between these indications of insanity and the hope that their attempt nevertheless represents a valid way of life is seen as dominating the final section of the novel.

Madness, in the form of the obsessions of the characters portrayed, determines the action, characterization and narra-
tive mode of Die Blündung. The society of Die Blündung is composed of monomaniac individuals, whose extreme egotism alienates them radically from society and reality. Each character's physical surroundings, and the images used in his characterization, provide an image of schizophrenic isolation and paralysis. The aggressive delusions of these characters are linked with paranoia, as Canetti portrays it in Masse und Macht. The "Irrenhaus" chapter is analyzed to demonstrate that it presents the same negative characteristics as Canetti's depiction of normal society; the novel offers no alternative to the radical and destructive image of insanity.

The conclusion relates the motif of madness to the criminal motif, suggesting that insanity is used within all three novels to reveal the underlying causes for those characteristics delineated by the motif of crime. The central factors of both motifs - in most general terms, the absence of unifying values, and the subsequent alienation of the individual from society and reality - are common to all three novels, although in widely varying ways. The final conclusions drawn from the role of these motifs in each novel suggest basic differences in the philosophical assumptions underlying each novel.