

MAX FRISCH: THE SEARCH FOR A  
WORKABLE HUMAN RELATIONSHIP

The author would like  
to express his appreciation to  
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## INTRODUCTION

### A GENERAL SURVEY OF FRISCH'S WORK

Max Frisch was born in 1911 into a middle-class Swiss milieu in Zürich, a setting which he often uses as a background for his work (Stiller, Homo Faber and Zürich-Transit, for instance, are all set partly in Zürich). Early studies in Germanistik were followed by work as a journalist. The influence of this journalistic training is still in evidence in the terseness and conciseness of Frisch's prose style. He is still active today as a free-lance political journalist and commentator. During this period Frisch completed and published two prose works: Jürg Reinhart ("ein erster, allzu jugendlicher Roman"<sup>1</sup> as he was to describe it) which he later incorporated in the novel Die Schwierigen, and a story Antwort aus der Stille. Frisch later destroyed both of these works and a number of other early efforts which he regarded as being too immature.

In 1936 Frisch began training as an architect at the Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule in Zürich and was awarded his diploma in 1941. During this period and the ten years which he subsequently spent as a practising architect he came into contact with the world of modern technology, the psychological effects of which he was later to analyse penetrating in Homo Faber. The

During World War II Frisch served as a border official on the Swiss frontier and recorded his experiences in prose form in a work entitled Blätter aus dem Brotsack which depicts everyday life in the Swiss military forces at this time. Frisch also treated the theme of war in two plays. Nun singen sie wieder (sub-titled "Versuch eines Requiems") deals with the horror and futility of death in war. Als der Krieg zu Ende war, set in the early days of occupied Germany, deals with the aftermath of war and the possibility of transcending national enmities through love.

After the war Frisch travelled widely in both Western and Eastern Europe and recorded his experiences in his Tagebuch 1946-1949 which was first published in 1950. Through the description in this work of small incidents, conversations and individuals he encountered on his travels Frisch is able to portray in a moving and convincing way the misery and poverty common in Europe at this time and the sense of dazed confusion and disbelief which gripped the continent in the wake of war and mass destruction. Frisch's position as a citizen of a neutral country made it easier for him to analyse developments in Western Europe from a standpoint independent of national and ideological grievances. His diary is thus refreshing in its insight into political realities in early post-war Europe and in the skill with which Frisch penetrates the pretence and polemics of the beginnings of the Cold War. The combination of optimistic humanism and a shrewd grasp of political

situations has characterized Frisch's political journalism up to this day. Frisch's concern with morality is indicated in the diary by his discussion of the moral questions inherent in political action which have become pressing moral questions for many writers and thinkers in this century. He points out, for instance, that no individual is in effect politically uncommitted, since a lack of political action betokens tacit support for the ruling party. "Wer sich nicht mit Politik befaßt, hat die politische Parteinahme, die er sich sparen möchte, bereits vollzogen: er dient der herrschenden Partei."<sup>2</sup> He also emphasizes the essential paradox of political action in that it often seems necessary to take immoral action if one wants to uphold a set of moral principles. He writes: "Man kann darauf bedacht sein, das Gute durchzusetzen und zu verwirklichen, oder man kann darauf bedacht sein, ein guter Mensch zu werden - das ist zweierlei, es schließt sich gegenseitig aus."<sup>3</sup> Frisch also treats a problem which has disturbed many European intellectuals since the war when he recognizes that the atrocities committed in Nazi Germany were carried out by people from a background not much different from his own.

"Wenn Menschen, die eine gleiche Erziehung genossen haben wie ich und gleiche Bücher, gleiche Musik, gleiche Gemälde lieben wie ich - wenn diese Menschen keineswegs gesichert sind vor der Möglichkeit, Unmenschen zu werden ..., woher nehme ich die Zuversicht, daß ich davor gesichert sei?"<sup>4</sup>

## Dramatic Works

Frisch sent a draft of his first play to Max Reinhardt at the age of only sixteen. It was only after the war, however, when the Swiss producer Kurt Hirschfeld commissioned him to write a play, that he began to write seriously for the stage. His first play, Santa Cruz, was published in 1947 and has been followed by other plays at intervals of a few years ever since. During 1947 Frisch was well acquainted with Bert Brecht, who was living in Zürich after his return to Europe from exile in America. The influence of Brecht on Frisch's drama<sup>5</sup> can most easily be detected in Die Chinesische Mauer (1947) which reminds the reader of Brecht's epic theatre as Frisch draws together characters from many periods of history and many parts of the globe in order to illustrate his ideas on the history of mankind. The influence of Brecht persists in Frisch's later plays (e.g. Biografie and Graf Öderland) through his rapid changes of scene and especially by the structure of Andorra which resembles a trial, as do many of Brecht's plays.<sup>6</sup>

In the years following the war German drama reached something of an impasse and the only dramatists in the German-speaking area to gain a European reputation during this period were Frisch and his compatriot Dürrenmatt. In 1951 Frisch published Don Juan oder die Liebe zur Geometrie, which is a comedy on the Don Juan theme, but in reverse. Frisch's Don Juan is not interested



in women, but they find him irresistible and will not leave him in peace to indulge his passion for geometry. During the 1950's, however, Frisch's reputation rested principally on his play Biedermann und die Brandstifter (1956). The dominant dramatic movement in Europe at this time was the theatre of the Absurd and Frisch's play is often included in this movement.<sup>7</sup> Although Biedermann und die Brandstifter is indeed a ruthless exposé of bourgeois self-delusion as is often presented by playwrights such as Ionesco, and although the situation in the play is one of extreme incredibility, the diversity of both form and content in Frisch's work as a whole enables him to escape classification with any particular literary group. His story of the steadfast, respectable Bürger Biedermann, whose house is burnt down because he refuses to recognize the threat constituted by the arsonists, is a humorous and witty farce. From the point of view of technique the play is interesting because of the chorus of firemen who continually point out the nearness of assistance if Biedermann can only penetrate his self-delusion and recognize the truth. Many playwrights and directors in the modern theatre have shown considerable interest in Greek drama,<sup>8</sup> but Frisch's use of a chorus is noteworthy, since this technique does not figure prominently among contemporary plays. Although the play can be interpreted as a satirical attack on the pompous lack of vision of the "Bürger" and as such stands in a strong European tradition dating

back at least as far as Molière, it can also be regarded as a political comment. It was written at the height of the Cold War, between the Korean war and the Cuban crisis, when the Western world was on the brink of destruction. It therefore had a particular relevance to those members of society who preferred to pretend not to see the problem and to hope it would go away, rather than confront it.

The play Graf Öderland must be of considerable importance to Frisch since he completed three versions of the text (in 1951, 1956 and 1961) before he was satisfied with it. The play is initially about the effect of dreams of the exotic on the human personality, a theme which has preoccupied Frisch a great deal, but the work changes course in the last few "Bilder" to become a political play on the consequences of violent action. The Staatsanwalt realizes the futility and limitation of his everyday life and wants to strike out into the unknown in search of personal freedom. He is prepared to use violence to remove any obstacles to this freedom placed in his way by the people around him. He sees this as the only way to guarantee his freedom. "Ich habe eine Axt in der Mappe. Die Erfahrung hat mich gelehrt, daß man anders nicht verhandeln kann."<sup>9</sup> By using force to overthrow the authorities, whom he regards as limiting his freedom, he places himself in the position of power from which he has driven them. He now finds he has made himself dictator and is a prisoner of his



office. His quest for freedom has resulted only in his own slavery. As a discussion of the value of violence in society Frisch's Graf Öderland could be compared with Schiller's Die Räuber. In both of these plays the protagonist attempts to alter his situation through the use of violence and both characters realize the limitation of this form of action at the end of the play. The difference between the characters, however, is that Karl Moor rejects violence on moral grounds because it has caused suffering and death, not the social reform he wanted, whereas the Staatsanwalt sees he cannot attain the personal liberation he wants, even if he overthrows the entire regime. Revolution means for Karl Moor bloodshed and anarchy and for the Staatsanwalt simply a change of social roles, a new form of imprisonment. It is interesting in this context to note that Frisch records in his diary that the first play he ever saw performed was in fact Schiller's Die Räuber.<sup>10</sup>

The publication in 1962 of Frisch's play Andorra aroused great interest in Germany and in Europe as a whole because of its treatment of the topic of anti-semitism. This issue had been crucial in European and particularly German experience in the not too distant past, but had been virtually ignored in German literature since the war. The play thus touched a raw nerve in the consciousness of the German people. Frisch's analytical rather than polemical approach to the subject and his refusal to assign guilt or responsibility

to any one character in the play aroused much comment and controversy. It is perhaps possible to attribute the vast number of German plays of the 1960's dealing with topical social issues (e.g. plays by Hochhuth, Walser and Weiss) in part to the example of Frisch's Andorra.

Frisch has never directed a play, but he has attended many rehearsals of his own and other authors' plays, and thus seems to gain a greater mastery of the stage as his work progresses. His latest play, Biografie (1967), is one of his most successful to date in the utilization of the potentialities of the stage to underline the content of his work. Frisch is very free in his use of space and time in this play, in which he depicts incidents from many stages in the life of his central character, Hannes Kürmann. However, Frisch gives the play a dramatic unity by providing the figure of the Registrar and his relationship with Kürmann as the central point around which the play is constructed. Frisch also uses lighting in an original and effective manner to differentiate between parts of the play which are meant to be seen as spontaneous and parts which are reenactments of earlier incidents in Kürmann's life. The importance which Frisch attaches to this particular work is indicated by the intense interest which he took in the first production of the play in Zürich. The noted German director Jost Nolte was brought to Zürich especially for this play, but his views clashed so violently with those of Frisch that the

production had to be abandoned. Frisch even contemplated directing the play himself and several productions were attempted before one was found which satisfied him.

### Prose Works

Frisch has published both prose and drama concurrently since the war and his novels have been at least as well-received as his plays. In 1943 he published Die Schwierigen oder j'adore ce qui me brûle and in 1952 the mysterious, symbolical story Bin oder die Reise nach Peking, but Frisch's first successful novel was Stiller, published in 1954. This novel was written partly during Frisch's stay in America, which perhaps explains the American setting of much of the novel (Sibylle's life in New York is depicted in some detail and the architect Sturzenegger leaves Switzerland to work in California). Frisch's standing as a novelist was confirmed by the appearance in 1957 of the novel Homo Faber (also set largely in America). These last two novels have achieved a high degree of success with the general public as well as with critics. The cause of this success is perhaps Frisch's straightforward, uncomplicated style with its flashes of ironic humour and his narrative technique. Frisch is a good story-teller and the many self-contained anecdotes and parables in his prose work are pleasant entertainment even when divorced from the context of the novels. The popular success of the novels can also be explained by comparing Frisch's technique with that of the detective novel

(it should be remembered that Frisch's friend Dürrenmatt is a writer of detective novels). One of Frisch's major themes could be summed up as the individual's search for his real self and this search is often framed in terms which resemble a detective's search for the truth about a crime. The detective novel is in effect a microcosm of the rational process. A crime has been committed. The detective investigates the circumstances, examines evidence, puts forward and rejects hypotheses and eventually solves the problem of the identity of the criminal. The detective novel thus illustrates the problem-solving function of the human intellect<sup>11</sup> and the subject of Frisch's work could be regarded as the investigation by the intellect of itself. Frisch's characters analyse themselves in an effort to pinpoint their true self. One of Frisch's characters could thus be described as a detective on the track of himself. Stiller resembles a detective novel in that it is initially about a man who is arrested on suspicion of being a certain individual named Stiller who is wanted for questioning in connection with a mysterious political affair. Stiller's denial of his identity in the face of the evidence brought against him by the authorities creates an element of suspense and doubt as to who he really is. Although in Homo Faber suspense is destroyed in one sense by hints of the outcome of the novel from the very beginning, another form of suspense is created since the reader is able to follow the development of Walter Faber as he comes closer and



closer to discovering the secret of his daughter's identity. (The situation in which the reader knows from the beginning the identity of the person who has committed the crime under investigation, is also common in the detective novel.) Mein Name sei Gantenbein (published in 1964) is not as straight-forward as Frisch's earlier novels because of its complex structure, but it is also reminiscent of a detective novel in that Frisch's technique of approaching a series of personalities from different angles and through many variations resembles the process by which the detective eliminates possibilities.

Frisch's training as an architect is evident in the complex structure of his novels. One of the main features of this structure is Frisch's handling of time. Frisch often makes reference to the memory of his characters and is thus engaged in depicting action on several time levels. In Homo Faber, for instance, the action of the plot is interspersed with Walter Faber's memories of his relationship with Hanna and his friend Joachim in Zürich and also with his gradual reconstruction of the past of Sabeth. This concern with time in the structure of the novels is linked with the content since the inability to escape one's own past is a recurring theme in Frisch's work. A key situation in both his novels and his plays is the confrontation of an individual with his past. Kürmann is given the opportunity to reenact episodes from his past, Stiller returns to Zürich, the scene of

the past life from which he has been trying to escape and Walter Faber is confronted with his past in living form when he encounters Joachim, Sabeth and then Hanna. Frisch is also working on several time levels in Stiller, where not only Stiller's experiences while under arrest are described, but also his relationship with Julika and Sibylle in the past, his experiences in Spain and so on. The structure of the novels is further complicated by the role which the imagination plays in Frisch's work. This occurs in Stiller's parables and stories, but also forms an essential part of the structure of the novel Gantenbein, much of which is composed of the phantasies of the narrator.

Frisch's Tagebuch 1946-1949 contains many sketches and drafts of prose works and plays which he has since used as the basis of his work. Andorra, for instance, exists in the diary in the form of a story, while Graf Öderland exists in a prose draft already divided into acts and scenes. It has also been noted by critics<sup>12</sup> that in his prose work Frisch shows a marked preference for the diary form. The greater part of Stiller is composed of Stiller's notebooks written in prison and Homo Faber consists of notes made by Walter Faber while in hospital. Gantenbein is not written explicitly in the form of a diary, but the use of the first person by the narrator gives a similar effect. Frisch may have chosen the diary form for reasons of technique. Because of its intimacy this form permits the narrator to make revelations and

speculations about himself and others which would be difficult to place in the context of a normal narrative. The diary form is also one which takes as its perspective the single point of view of the author of the diary. Frisch tends in his prose to see the action primarily through the eyes of one (usually male) character. While other characters are often real and life-like (such as Sibylle and Rolf in Stiller and Sabeth and Hanna in Homo Faber) the reader usually learns about them not from the standpoint of an omniscient observer but from what the central character says about them, what they say to him and what others tell him about them. This approach is important to the content of Frisch's work, since one of the major problems with which he deals is the difficulty of seeing life from another person's point of view and of penetrating the maze of projected images and assumed roles to attain a real understanding of another person. The diary form is also important in the context of Frisch's work since a diary records not only the external events of a person's life, but also the internal thoughts, phantasies and memories which preoccupy him. One of the dominant themes of Frisch's work is the discrepancy between phantasy and reality and the individual's efforts to alter the events of his biography to correspond with his vision of how they could be.<sup>13</sup>



## CHAPTER 1 - CRITICAL APPROACHES TO FRISCH

The work of Max Frisch is extremely complex and can be examined from a number of different angles. This gives rise to a wide range of possible interpretations, none of which necessarily precludes any of the others. The methods of approaching Frisch's work adopted by contemporary critics has thus been very diverse, as each critic has concentrated on the aspects of the work which he found most striking.

### The Sociological Approach

One of the most stimulating approaches taken to Frisch has been the method of sociological analysis, adopted by several critics. Manfred Jurgensen,<sup>1</sup> for instance, discusses Frisch's relationship with the society around him in terms of the concept of 'Engagement'. Jurgensen shows how Frisch progressed in the early stages of his work from a concern with personal problems of identity to a dialectical analysis of contemporary social issues. He interprets Die Chinesische Mauer as a portrayal of the situation of modern man in the shadow of the explosion of the atomic bomb on Bikini Atoll, and his feelings of helplessness before such weapons and the governments which possess them. He writes:

"Die Gestalten der 'Chinesischen Mauer' wandeln im Vakuum ihrer selbsterbeigeführten geistigen Isolation. Sie bleiben allezeit Marionetten, Spieluhr- und Schachfiguren, die sich in erster Linie durch ihre willenslose Mechanik kennzeichnen."<sup>2</sup>

Jurgensen also analyses the influence of Brecht's view of epic theatre and of society on Frisch's development as a dramatist. He interprets Biedermann, for instance, as a depiction of the Bürger in the face of sudden destruction. From the point of view of the relationship between social classes the play can be seen as an analysis of the decline of the bourgeoisie. Jurgensen writes: "Der Untergang des Bürgertums muß als unmittelbar der thematischen Auseinandersetzung des Stückes zugehörig betrachtet werden."<sup>3</sup> He also points out that Andorra is the most appropriate of Frisch's plays to analyse from a sociological standpoint since so many of the characters are representatives of social types. The only thing they have in common is their relationship with society. Referring to the series of unnamed characters in the play Jurgensen writes:

"Statt unabhängige Individuen zu verkörpern, repräsentieren sie in erster Linie die Gesellschaft der sie angehören. Sie müssen, wie schon Frisch hervorgehoben hat, grundsätzlich als Typen betrachtet werden. Was sie miteinander verbindet ist vor allem die Tatsache, daß sich jeder von ihnen ein Bildnis von Andorra hat."<sup>4</sup>

Hans Mayer<sup>5</sup> also studies Frisch from a sociological point of view. Mayer's main concern is to demonstrate how Frisch depicts the relationship between modern man and the technological society in which he lives, particularly with reference to the novels Stiller and Homo Faber. "Leben und Literatur im Zeitalter der Reproduktion; das ist Max Frischs eigentliches Thema im Roman 'Stiller',"<sup>6</sup> writes Mayer. He regards Frisch's work as a critique

of contemporary bourgeois capitalism as epitomized in the technological societies of America and Western Europe. Mayer seems to be applying a form of the Marxist doctrine of the alienation of labour in a society of mass production and a large industrial work force. He sees Frisch's work as depicting the alienation of the individual in the age of mass production ("Reproduktion statt der Individualität"<sup>7</sup>), which is induced by the subordination of man to machine ("Nicht Freiheit sondern extremer gesellschaftlicher Automatismus"<sup>8</sup>). Walter Faber's outbursts against America and the technological society in Homo Faber<sup>9</sup> could be interpreted as supporting this view. Perhaps under the influence of Herbert Marcuse, Mayer places great emphasis on the role of the mass media and the luxuries of technology in Western society, which he believes numb and paralyse the individual in both an intellectual and emotional sense, separating him from the physical world in which he lives. Mayer is able to draw on examples from Frisch's work to support this view. For instance, Stiller writes in prison:

"Wir leben in einem Zeitalter der Reproduktion. Das allermeiste in unserem persönlichen Weltbild haben wir nie mit eigenen Augen erfahren, genauer: wohl mit eigenen Augen, doch nicht an Ort und Stelle; wir sind Fernseher, Fernhörer, Fernwisser."<sup>10</sup>

In this context it is significant that Stiller takes up pottery at the end of the novel, since this can be interpreted as a return to the simpler and more satisfying craftsmanship of the pre-industrial age. Ursula Roisch<sup>11</sup> (whose attitude to Frisch is reminiscent of

Mayer's) maintains that the lyrical descriptions of nature which characterize Frisch's writing represents the setting up of Nature as an alternative to the destructive force of Western civilization. She sees the only possibilities to escape the effects of the technological society in the total rejection of society (which she likens to that proposed by Rousseau and which could be seen in Stiller's retirement from the world at the end of Stiller) or in the decadence and hedonism with which Faber reproaches American society. Roisch writes:

"Was sich bestimmten Kreisen der spätbürgerlichen Gesellschaft als Alternative zu bieten scheint, ist entweder ein antiquierter, larmoyanter Rousseauismus, der das Zeichen des Artifizialen trägt ..., oder Perversität."<sup>12</sup>

The sociological approach to Frisch can also proceed on a less theoretical level in the study of the encounter with Swiss society which plays an important role in Frisch's work. Frisch's ambivalent attitude to his homeland can be detected in the pattern of his biography. Although he has always maintained close links with Switzerland, he has preferred to spend much of his time living abroad.<sup>13</sup> A similar pattern is evident in the setting of his work. Parts of his works are set in North and South America, France and Greece, but Zürich always emerges as the focal point around which the characters' lives revolve and to which they are almost inevitably drawn. Frisch uses the familiar technique of the "Heimkehrroman" (especially in Stiller) in which a character



returns to his home after being away for some time and sees the milieu with new eyes in the light of his experience. Some of Frisch's views on Switzerland are contained in a speech he made in Zürich on the Swiss national day in 1957.<sup>14</sup> He expresses in this speech his love for his homeland, but also his refusal to let this love blind him to its faults. He says: "Ich habe manches Land in Europa and außerhalb Europas gesehen, und ich bin gern Schweizer, aber ich fühle mich nicht verpflichtet, die Schweiz für besser zu halten als andere Länder."<sup>15</sup> Although Frisch expressly pointed out that his play Andorra was not meant to be an indictment of any particular nation, the parallels between the adamant neutrality of the state of Andorra in the face of the atrocities of "die Schwarzen" and the policies of the Swiss government during World War II were too striking to be missed by critics and audience alike. Frisch emphasizes that it is not his intention in his work to condemn specific nations outright, but only to point out contradictions in the behaviour of his characters and divergences between their ideals and practice. Stiller also claims: "Ich hasse nicht die Schweiz, sondern die Verlogenheit".<sup>16</sup> He cannot tolerate hypocrisy simply because it is practised by his fellow countrymen. Frisch acknowledges gratefully that the basic democratic privileges which are the legacy of the Swiss political system are sacredly guaranteed and protected. He remarks in his speech: "Wir haben allen Grund zu singen, weil uns niemand zwingt zu singen, und weil

niemand bestraft wird, wenn er nicht auf diesen Platz gekommen ist."<sup>17</sup> As a writer, Frisch appreciates the opportunity to write freely whatever he wishes, an opportunity which is not granted in all countries. Yet he is aware that such rights constitute only a fraction of human freedom and that the relationship between individual and society is complicated by many pressures to conformity and acceptance of group values. Stiller comments bitterly: "Wahrscheinlich kann es überhaupt keine Freiheit geben, wie man sie hierzulande zu haben behauptet; es gibt nur Unterschiede in der Unfreiheit".<sup>18</sup> It is important to consider to what use political and personal freedoms are put by the members of a society to determine their worth. As Stiller says again: "Frei! Frei! Frei! und umsonst ersuche ich ihn einmal zu sagen: frei wovon? und vor allem: frei wöfür?"<sup>19</sup>

Frisch is also concerned about the role of Switzerland in the modern world and the future of the nation. He is distressed that Swiss people are often sensitive to criticism of their country and on occasions almost reactionary in their opposition to change. "Die Schweizer haben Angst vor allem Neuen ... Etwas Neues wagen wir erst dann, wenn die andern es schon ausprobiert haben."<sup>20</sup> He suspects that the reason for this sensitivity is an uncertainty about the position of Switzerland in the modern world and a persistence in holding to the image of the nation's past greatness: "Jeder, der eine Rolle spielt, die nicht ganz mit der Wirklichkeit

übereinstimmt, muß ja Angst haben, und darum erträgt er sehr wenig Kritik".<sup>21</sup> Yet a cohesive society cannot be built upon memories of past glory. The attention of a society must be focused on the role of the nation in the present and its goals for development in the future. As Stiller remarks:

"Hat die Schweiz (so frage ich Sturzenegger) irgendein Ziel in die Zukunft hinaus? Zu bewahren, was man besitzt oder besessen hat, ist eine notwendige Aufgabe, doch nicht genug; um lebendig zu sein, braucht man ja auch ein Ziel in die Zukunft hinaus."<sup>22</sup>

Frisch can thus be interpreted in the context of the relationship between the modern Swiss writer and his society. This approach is rewarding since the encounter between writer and society seems to be a dominant theme in modern Swiss literature. In this respect the reasoned criticism of Frisch (and to a certain extent Dürrenmatt) seems to stand between the gentle and fairly ineffectual criticism of nineteenth century writers such as Gottfried Keller and the more uncompromising and polemical attitude of younger writers such as Peter Bichsel.<sup>23</sup>

### The Religious Approach

Frisch has sometimes been regarded as a religious writer because of the influence on his writing of the philosophy of Kierkegaard. Philip Manger<sup>24</sup> has been the most successful critic to date in the integration of these two bodies of thought. The importance of Kierkegaard in the novel Stiller can hardly be denied since the novel is prefaced by two quotations from Kierkegaard and



Stiller reads Kierkegaard in prison and discusses him with Rolf. Manger points out that Kierkegaard postulates three stages of religious development:- the aesthetic stage, which is an exploration of the possibilities of life, but without a firm decision or choice, the ethical stage in which the individual wills his own development by choice and the final religious stage of the choice of a leap into faith. Stiller's development in the novel can be seen as illustrating this process. Kierkegaard places great emphasis on individual choice. Choice is the criterion of freedom, but real freedom comes only with the choice of the self as opposed to an image of how it might be (Kierkegaard calls this "choosing oneself"). As Manger puts it: "The only inalienable freedom the individual possesses is the freedom to choose himself."<sup>25</sup> But self-acceptance takes great courage and an individual must go through the agony of despair before he can choose himself. Stiller refuses to accept his own past, but self-acceptance entails the acceptance of the past which is a fundamental part of the self. As Manger writes:

"Repetition proper ... is a reintegration of the self, a rebirth of the personality. And it comes about by the free choice of the self, when the individual accepts his self in its historic continuity, with everything that belongs to it, the past as well as the present."<sup>26</sup>

The concept of "repetition" is important in Frisch's work (Stiller for instance writes: "Meine Angst: die Wiederholung"<sup>27</sup>).

Manger explains:

"Repetition must not be simply understood as recurrence. Repetition is free, a religious experience, involving choice, whereby something that existed before continues as something new."<sup>28</sup>

Thus repetition can be seen as referring to the kind of spiritual or existential rebirth resulting from the choice of the self. As Kierkegaard expresses it: "When one says life is a repetition, one affirms that an existence which has been, now becomes something new."<sup>29</sup>

In this way Manger compares the development of Stiller with the development of the individual as outlined by Kierkegaard. In this interpretation the first part of the novel depicts Stiller in the aesthetic state of self-questioning and despair. His choice of his self at the end of Part I leads him into the ethical state described by Rolf in the 'Nachtrag'. Manger postulates that the death of Julika at the end of the novel brings about the final leap into the freedom of faith and the beginning of the religious stage of Stiller's life.

Manger draws striking parallels between the thought of Kierkegaard and the ideas contained in Stiller and he quotes instances where Frisch expresses himself in terms which correspond very closely to those used by Kierkegaard.<sup>30</sup> Yet in the light of the development of Frisch's work since Stiller this interpretation, though valid, seems limited. As religion plays no significant role in Frisch's later writings it would seem that he has diverged from

his earlier concern with metaphysical questions.

### The Psychological Approach

Frisch's concept of the ego has also been of considerable interest to critics. Man's view of himself has been radically altered by the events and discoveries of the twentieth century. The attitude to the human mind was drastically changed from the turn of the century onwards by the work of Freud, who pointed out that the mind is by no means as clear-cut and logical as it may once have seemed, but is directed by unconscious forces which the individual finds hard to control and of which he may be totally unaware. This discovery raised great doubts as to the extent to which motivations can be attributed to people. The reasons for an individual's actions can no longer be regarded as obvious. To gain an insight into his motivation it would be necessary to probe the still badly-charted areas of the unconscious.

Another important factor contributing to the reassessment of man in this century has been the succession of economic and social disasters which have befallen Western civilization and which include World War I, the Great Depression, the rise of Fascism and the disillusionment with socialism. These situations have brought modern man face to face with the dark side of his nature, which he believed he had left behind. Despite the achievements of modern industry and technology, he continues to be amazed at the seemingly unlimited capacity for brutality and sadism which still lies within

him. Civilization, like the individual of the Post-Freudian era, is no longer what it seemed and for many people the stability and sense of purpose of pre-1914 Western society is as remote as the world of antiquity.

The effect of such occurrences has been to initiate a drastic reappraisal of the nature of man, a process which is still far from complete. This process has been reflected in literature in many ways (e.g. in radical movements such as dadaism, expressionism and surrealism) and particularly in the modern novel which is often characterized by an attitude of uncertainty on the part of the novelist and an unwillingness to make definitive statements on the personality of characters.<sup>31</sup> The very concept of "objectivity" is suspect and many writers maintain that the world as such does not exist for us. Only the world as we see it exists. Thus the concept of the omniscient observer has been discarded by many novelists, who experiment freely to find a form capable of expressing their uncertainty. Some are attracted to the Ich-Roman,<sup>32</sup> which claims only to present the world from one person's point of view (it has already been noted that Frisch shows a marked preference for the diary form). Other writers choose to approach characters and situations from various subjective angles and to see the action from the point of view of several characters<sup>33</sup> (this technique has greatly influenced the structure of Frisch's Gantenbein).

The literary form most suspect in the eyes of many modern



writers is the "Bildungsroman". In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries many such novels were written, in which the experiences of an individual at the stage of adolescence or early manhood were described to show how he attained the stable and permanent personality which would characterize him in adulthood.<sup>34</sup> The prevailing view among many contemporary writers is that such a static personality never exists, but that the "personality" is a flexible, fluctuating entity which can never be pinpointed exactly as it changes almost by the moment. The process of mental life thus becomes a continual death and rebirth and what would once have been described as the "self" is often seen today as a succession of random, unconnected "selves".<sup>35</sup> Frisch's fluid concept of the ego is very much in this vein. Michael Kustow comments: "Frisch believes that the central human experience, that which defines a man who is living his life in any significant way, is by nature quivering and unstable."<sup>36</sup> In this respect Frisch's approach is often close to that of the French writers of the "nouveau roman" to whom he has been compared.<sup>37</sup>

Frisch's analysis of the ego is concerned basically with the nature of role. He postulates that an individual adopts an almost infinite number of roles according to the different situations in which he finds himself. A person's behaviour depends on the way in which he sees his relationship with the people around him, so his role will change according to his surroundings and the people

he is with. This multiplicity of roles is brought out in Stiller where Frisch describes Julika looking at a number of pictures of herself in a magazine. Each picture represents a different role.

"So viele Juliken gab es nun, Julika am Kiosk, Julika in der Eisenbahn, Julika im trauten Heim, Julika im Kaffeehaus, Julika im Manteltasche eleganter Herren, Julika neben dem Suppenteller, ..." <sup>38</sup>

A similar point is made in Gantenbein where the narrator imagines various roles which Gantenbein could be called on to play:

"Gantenbein als Reiseführer -  
 Gantenbein beim Zerlegen von Forellen -  
 Gantenbein als Schachspieler -  
 Gantenbein an der Krümmen Lanke -  
 Gantenbein als Gastgeber -  
 Gantenbein vor dem Stadtarzt -  
 Gantenbein bei Kurzschuß im Haus -  
 Gantenbein in der Dior-boutique -  
 ... " <sup>39</sup>

One of Frisch's main concerns is the individual's relationship with the roles he plays for himself and others. He investigates the problem of whether all roles are merely pretence or whether some roles can be a genuine expression of the self and indeed whether a "self" can actually exist divorced from role.

#### Interpersonal Relations in the Work of Frisch

The various approaches to Frisch outlined above are all valid interpretations and provide a series of satisfactory bases from which to view Frisch's work. <sup>40</sup> The aim of this study, however, is to point out some of the ways in which the analysis of interpersonal relations <sup>41</sup> also forms an important part of the totality

of Frisch's work. The concern with interpersonal relations can be regarded as one of the most essential aspects of Frisch's work since it links the various facets of his literary efforts. Frisch's work has been in many ways very diverse. He has written both prose and drama and his prose work itself ranges from diaries to stories and novels. Yet it seems justifiable to examine his work as a whole because of the extreme cohesiveness of its content. Many themes recur continually throughout his work and even individual characters seem to reappear in a more developed form in later works. An unnamed sculptor, for instance, who closely resembles Stiller, appears briefly in Die Schwierigen. In this novel he shares a studio with the painter Jürg Reinhart. The character of Enderlin in Gantenbein, a successful scholar who believes he has cancer, seems to form the basis of the later character of Kürmann in Biografie. The plot of Frisch's film script Zürich-Transit is related during the course of Gantenbein and it has already been noted that Frisch recorded many ideas in his diary which were later to be developed into important works. It is now appropriate to examine in more detail the role which interpersonal relations play in the body of Frisch's work.

#### The Theme of Friendship

Friendship is a recurring theme in the works of Frisch. He emphasizes the difficulty which his characters have in attaining friendship. The cave parable of the two cowboys in



Stiller,<sup>42</sup> for instance, shows how what seems to be friendship can disintegrate under stress. When the cowboys are trapped in the cave their trust and mutual respect turn into suspicion and hostility. Yet friendship is important to Frisch's characters. Walter Faber goes hundreds of miles out of his way on two occasions in the course of the novel Homo Faber simply in order to visit his old friend Joachim and Joachim's brother. As an explanation of this behaviour, he remarks: "Man hat nicht soviel Freunde."<sup>43</sup>

Frisch points out the difference between friends and acquaintances. Walter Faber has a circle of acquaintances in New York, but realizes as the novel progresses that Joachim was the only person in his life whom he could really describe as a friend (he says "Joachim war mein einziger wirklicher Freund"<sup>44</sup>). He acknowledges that his acquaintance Dick is an admirable person and a pleasant companion, but insists nevertheless that their relationship lacks the intimacy and frankness which should characterize friendship.

"Dick, zum Beispiel ist nett ..., hochgebildet, ein witziger Mensch, den ich bewunderte ... oder wenigstens beneidete, einer von denen, die uns das Leben retten könnten, ohne daß man deswegen je intimer wird."<sup>45</sup>

Frisch describes the superficiality of what often passes for friendship in modern society. People spend time together in the mutual enjoyment of a continuous stream of parties and dinners, but friendship does not really exist in this milieu since the

individual is superfluous in the crowd and one "friend" is interchangeable with another. Friendship is a personal matter, based on a recognition of the other's individuality, so it is excluded by this form of superficial gregariousness. In the midst of such a gathering Faber denounces the situation bitterly: "In eurer Gesellschaft könnte man sterben, ohne daß ihr es merkt, von Freundschaft keine Spur, sterben könnte man in eurer Gesellschaft! schrie ich zu, und wozu wir überhaupt miteinander reden, schrie ich, ... wozu diese ganze Gesellschaft, wenn einer sterben könnte, ohne daß ihr es merkt."<sup>46</sup> This kind of friendship demands that an individual assume a role of artificial sociability and amiability, even though he means nothing to the people around him and they mean nothing to him. Walter Faber refers to his colleague Williams and says: "Williams meint, ich müsse eine Rolle spielen, besser eine komische als keine. Man kann nicht einfach in der Ecke stehen und Mandeln essen."<sup>47</sup> A similar situation occurs in Stiller when Stiller's former friend Sturzenegger is brought to see him in prison in the hope that Stiller will recognize him. For Stiller, people such as Sturzenegger are not friends at all, since they come merely to discuss trivialities with someone they do not really understand. Interaction becomes a stereotyped ritual.

"Einmal spüre ich etwas Unheimliches, eine Mechanik in den menschlichen Beziehungen, die Bekanntschaft oder gar Freundschaft genannt, alles Lebendige sofort verunmöglicht, alles Gegenwärtige ausschließt."<sup>48</sup>

The relationship becomes sterile and inhuman, because each person neglects the individuality of the other. Even language becomes a pre-conditioned response to a verbal stimulus.

"Aber es funktioniert alles wie ein Automat: oben fällt der Name hinein, der vermeintliche, und unten kommt schon die dazugehörige Umgangsart heraus, fix und fertig, ready for use, das Klischee einer menschlichen Beziehung, die ihm (Sturzenegger) ... wie kaum eine andere am Herzen liegt."<sup>49</sup>

It seems to Stiller that he and Sturzenegger are merely acting out the role which each believes is expected of him. "Eine volle Stunde lang spielen wir Sturzenegger und Stiller, und das Unheimliche."<sup>50</sup>

#### The Theme of Paternity

Another aspect of interpersonal relations which occurs repeatedly in Frisch's work is the theme of parenthood, which is usually seen from a man's point of view. In Die Schwierigen paternity is seen as an effort to perpetuate oneself, an attempt to produce something which will survive one's own death. "Zum erstenmal denkt auch der Mann an das Kind, das ihn überdauert, und will es ohne Verstellung. Es öffnet sich über allem ein ganz anderer Raum -."<sup>51</sup> In a sense the relationship between man and child begins even before the child is born, since a man has an attitude towards the prospective birth of his child. Frisch depicts, for instance, the apprehensiveness of the man about to become a father (a state which he describes in Die Schwierigen as: "die abgründige Verlegenheit, Vater zu sein"<sup>52</sup>). Lack of

experience and maturity may make a man feel uneasy at the necessity of having to accept the responsibilities of parenthood. In the course of Homo Faber Walter Faber recalls his reaction to the news that Hanna is pregnant and comments: "ich war nur zu jung wie die meisten Männer unter dreißig, zu unfertig, um Vater zu sein."<sup>53</sup>

The relationship between man and child becomes more complex when the child is actually born and grows into a distinct person. It is then impossible to escape the fact of the child's existence. As Kürmann says: "Man kann ein Kind, das einmal da ist, nicht aus der Welt denken".<sup>54</sup> The relationship between Kürmann and Thomas in Biografie shows how paternity implies a relationship on both an intellectual and an emotional level. On the emotional level a man is concerned for the safety and well-being of his child, whereas on the intellectual level the child represents another mind with which an exchange of ideas is possible. Kürmann says of Thomas:

"Wenn er zu weit in den See hinausschwimmt, habe ich Angst und rufe. Ich lerne nochmals Latein, um ihm zu helfen, und wenn er denkt, freut es mich und wenn er wissen will, was ich denke, versuche ich mich zu erklären."<sup>55</sup>

The detail of Kürmann learning Latin to help his son illustrates the element of self-sacrifice in paternity. By its mere existence the child makes demands on the parents for guidance and protection, so time and effort devoted to the child's development are part of



the responsibilities of parenthood. This detail of learning Latin recalls a similar detail in Homo Faber where the same point is made. "(Hanna) lernt mit vierzig Jahren noch Geige, um ihr Kind begleiten zu können. Nichts ist Hanna zuviel, wenn es um ihr Kind geht."<sup>56</sup>

The difficulty of the relationship between man and child is also demonstrated by the relations between Kürmann and Thomas, which are characterized by misunderstanding and an inability to see things from the other's point of view. The contrast between Kürmann and Thomas illustrates the clash of views between parent and child. Since their experience is different they are in effect living in different worlds (this is true in a geographical sense, as Kürmann lives in the "old world" of Europe and Thomas lives in the "new world" of America, the land of Kürmann's youth). Their interests are different, as is shown by their work. Kürmann is a scientist, but Thomas is a prospective artist, studying film. The continual misunderstanding between them results in a rejection of each other's world. Thomas reproaches his father by commenting: "Er ist einfach nicht mehr im Bild",<sup>57</sup> whereas Kürmann dismisses his son's arguments with the words: "Du bist jung, Thomas, aber das ist vorderhand auch alles, was du bist. Du mit deinem Haar."<sup>58</sup>

#### The Role of the Couple

The chief form of human relationship which Frisch chooses to study is not, however, friendship or paternity, but the couple.<sup>59</sup> A number of critics have noted the importance of the theme of



marriage or the couple in Frisch's work. Joachim Kaiser, for instance, writes: "Das große Thema von Max Frisch's Epik ist - notwendig vag ausgedrückt - die unglückliche Verbindung zweier Menschen",<sup>60</sup> and later: "Er (Frisch) ist, was das Verhältnis der Geschlechter betrifft, der Strindberg, ja der Hamsun unserer Tage".<sup>61</sup> Frisch's fascination with the theme of the "scheiternde Ehe" has also been noted by critics.<sup>62</sup> The break-down of a marriage is something which Frisch depicts again and again from endlessly changing perspectives and by means of many different characters. Hans Mayer, writing of Stiller, comments: "Drei (eigentlich vier) Ehen im Grunde, von denen hier berichtet wird. Alle erweisen sich als Mißerfolge".<sup>63</sup> Marriage is the closest and most complex relationship between two people because it involves cohabitation and the most intense sharing of experience and because it is entered into as a permanent state. The analysis of marriage could thus be regarded as almost a laboratory experiment in the nature of interpersonal relations in general.

The situation of the discovery of a partner's infidelity occurs repeatedly in Frisch's work.<sup>64</sup> The importance of this situation is that it indicates the complete failure of a couple. Such a discovery raises the question of what one should do in this situation. Frisch does not make pointless moral stands or recriminations, but like many other writers who have been drawn to this theme,<sup>65</sup> he cannot provide a definitive answer to the problem. As the Australian author Frank Hardy has written: "There is no

satisfactory solution for such a problem: it is as old as society itself, it has never been solved, not ever, without someone being hurt."<sup>66</sup> The only real solution lies in ensuring as far as possible that the problem does not arise. The question of whether it is in fact possible to ensure this lies at the heart of Frisch's work.

#### The Concept of a Workable Human Relationship

It is from the stream of broken marriages, unhappy love affairs and bitter conflicts, the description of which constitutes so much of Frisch's work, that the concept of a "workable human relationship" begins to emerge. The description of such failures would be of little value if the hope did not exist that a human relationship could be established which would not result in conflict and despair. By analysing the reasons for the failure of human relationships Frisch would seem to be attempting to establish guidelines for a hypothetical relationship which would indeed be successful and would not be characterized by the misunderstandings and self-recriminations of the couples which appear in his novels and plays. In this context the novel Gantenbein could be interpreted as the phantasy of a narrator directed at just this problem. The narrator continually alters the nature and circumstances of the imaginary characters of Gantenbein, Lila and Enderlin in an attempt to find the key to a workable human relationship. The aim of the novel is to find out what kind of character and what kind of behaviour best lead to such a relationship.

The workable human relationship is linked with Frisch's concept of 'das Paar'. The word 'das Paar' often occurs in Frisch's work and seems to denote a particular kind of relationship characterized by harmony. This ideal relationship is indicated by Frisch's use of the classical image of Philemon and Baucis in connection with the word 'Paar' ("Sie hießen Philemon und Baucis: das Paar"<sup>67</sup>). This ancient couple of Greek mythology who loved each other so deeply that they requested Zeus to allow them to die at the same moment rather than be separated, represents the most idyllic of relationships. Frisch's story Das Paar, which was first published separately<sup>68</sup> and then included in the novel Gantenbein, gives an image of this kind of relationship. The essence of the relationship is that it is self-contained and self-sufficient ("da seid ihr allein in einem Haus, Ihr zwei, aber das seid ihr oft, so oft"<sup>69</sup>). There is a balance between freedom and responsibility ("Ihr seid ein Paar, jederzeit frei, aber ein Paar"<sup>70</sup>). Each partner has a need for the other which is expressed by communication during their separation ("Aus einem Hotelzimmer mit leerem Doppelbett ruft Ihr an, Kosten nicht scheuend, aus London oder Hamburg oder Sils, um zu plaudern mitten in der Nacht, dringlich vor Liebe"<sup>71</sup>). A mutual bond is created by familiarity with each other, both in a physical sense ("Ihr kennt eure Körper, wie man seine Möbel kennt"<sup>72</sup>) and by knowledge of one another's past experience ("das Vorleben des andern ist ein Buch, das man wie einen Klassiker zu kennen meint"<sup>73</sup>).

This bond is expressed in spatial terms by the sharing of a house (Frisch writes of a "gemeinsames Zimmer"<sup>74</sup> and "gemeinsames Bad"<sup>75</sup>). It can be observed that in his work Frisch tends to use words in a particular pattern in connection with 'das Paar' (such as "Mann und Weib",<sup>76</sup> "ein Mann und ein Weib",<sup>77</sup> "eine männlich, eine weiblich"<sup>78</sup>). By examining the structure of such phrases some of the features inherent in Frisch's concept of 'das Paar' can be inferred. The harmony of the relationship and the equality of the two partners is indicated by the equal stress placed on both words and the choice of words containing an equal number of syllables. 'Das Paar' as a combination of two in one is demonstrated by the choice of separate words linked by the joining-word "und" or a comma. This implies both a common bond and a sense of separateness, a sharing of experience and a region of personal autonomy. This ideal relationship of 'das Paar' can be equated with the concept of the workable human relationship in that Frisch seems to be putting it forward as a goal towards which individuals could strive.

#### The Chess Motif

The motif of chess occurs frequently in Frisch's work and is closely related to the theme of the couple. Walter Faber, for instance, carries a pocket chess set around with him constantly, Kürmann plays chess with Antoinette Stein during Biografie and Gantenbein plays regularly with his friend Burri. This motif of chess can be interpreted as alluding to the nature of interpersonal



relations in general and particularly the couple, since chess is a game for two people. Frisch's view of interpersonal relations could thus be likened to a game (Biografie has the sub-title "ein Spiel") in the sense that it is a process which must be carried on under the limitation of strict rules. If the rules are not obeyed by all players the game ceases to exist. In the field of interpersonal relations, as in chess, a move by one person is followed by a counter-move by another, to which the first person responds, and so the game proceeds. As in the case of a chess player, each person involved in relationships with others is responsible entirely for his choice of moves, but must allow his partner the same autonomy of action. Each person chooses his next move in accordance with the move his partner has just made, but cannot determine what move the partner will make in his turn. These rules are laid down by the Registrar in Biografie as restrictions on Kürmann's freedom of action.<sup>79</sup> The analogy between the move and counter-move structure of chess and the process of interaction between persons is made explicit by Frisch in Gantenbein. In this novel he describes a conversation between several characters in the following terms: "jemand redete von der Berliner Mauer, Meinungen, Gegenmeinungen, leidenschaftlich, ein Schach auch so, Zug und Gegenzug, ein Gesellschaftsspiel".<sup>80</sup> It is only by the adherence of both partners to the 'Spielregel' of interpersonal relations that any kind of workable human relationship can be



attained.

The failures to attain such a relationship which occur continually in Frisch's work can be interpreted as failures to abide by the 'Spielregel'. A game such as chess can be disrupted either by one player failing to move when it is his turn (i.e., in terms of interpersonal relations, by withdrawal) or by a player forcing his partner to move in a particular way against his will (i.e. by violence). Both of these forms of action are contraventions of the rules and thus eliminate any chance of the game proceeding. The case of Kürmann is an example of a character who is unable to establish any successful relationship because he is passive and unresponsive and avoids if possible making any move whatsoever. The phrase "Sie sind am Zug" occurs in Biografie,<sup>81</sup> but when Kürmann is given the chance to make a decisive action and direct the course of his life he is unable to do so. Walter Faber is a similar kind of character in that he also consciously avoids interaction with other people. Such reticence or withdrawal is a passive form of destruction of the couple.

A more active kind of destruction occurs when one partner attempts to decide what moves his partner will make. This takes the form of attempting to force a role or pattern of behaviour onto an individual, which that person regards as unnatural. This method of imposing on the other's freedom and restricting his actions is a form of existential violence which is just as cruel

and oppressive as actual physical brutality. Stiller points to this kind of violence when he says of his relationship with Julika:

"Es gibt allerlei Arten, einen Menschen zu morden oder wenigstens seine Seele, und das merkt keine Polizei der Welt. Dazu genügt ein Wort, eine Offenheit im rechten Augenblick. Dazu genügt ein Lächeln."<sup>82</sup>

The subject of interpersonal relations is of course by no means new in literature. The relationship between an individual and the people around him lies at the very heart of even the oldest literature<sup>83</sup> and it could be argued that this theme is essential to all literature. Yet there has been an extraordinary emphasis in twentieth century literature on the analysis of conflict between people and the difficulties of communication<sup>84</sup> and many modern novelists and playwrights seem to be obsessed by this theme. Much modern literature portrays the undercurrents of violence and aggression which constitute the "domestic nightmare" of family life.<sup>85</sup> It is possible that literature of this kind forms part of a wider reassessment of the manner in which people communicate and interact in our culture. It has been suggested, for instance, that the high level of mental illness in Western civilization indicates some fundamental faults in the patterns of communication prevalent in our society. One psychiatrist wrote of schizophrenia recently:

"By present calculation almost one in every 100 children born will fall into this category at some time or other before the age of forty-five, and in the U.K. at the moment there are roughly 60,000 men and women in mental hospitals, and many more outside hospital, who are termed schizophrenic. A child born today in the U.K. stands a ten times greater chance of being admitted to a mental hospital than to a university."<sup>86</sup>

Changes in the patterns of interaction within a society necessitate changes in the structure of the society and it has been suggested that the present era is a transitional stage in the development of Western society, when the forms of communication characterizing the small family group are giving way to those found in tribal or communal types of social organization:

"It seems very likely that a hundred years from now the general pattern of domestic life ... will be altogether different from what it is now ... Our present society is emotionally very uncomfortable ... The parents fight, the children rebel. Children need to grow up in larger, more relaxed domestic groups centred on the community rather than on mother's kitchen; something like an Israeli kibbutz perhaps or a Chinese commune."<sup>87</sup>

Such predictions are very difficult to substantiate but it would seem that we are living at present in a period of crisis in human relations, which may perhaps explain the fascination which the study of the "mésalliance" has for Frisch and many of his fellow-writers. It is against such a background that Frisch's work can be viewed.

## CHAPTER 2 - THE TRAGEDY OF THE INTELLECTUAL

There can be determined in the work of Frisch a distinct character type which emerges from the diverse series of central characters which are presented in his novels and plays. The circumstances of these central characters vary greatly (Jürg Reinhart, for instance, is a painter, Stiller is a sculptor, Walter Faber is an engineer, Hannes Kürmann a behavioural scientist, Enderlin a classical scholar), yet they have in common that they are all engaged in intellectual activities. These characters are intellectual in the sense that they are analytical in their approach to their own situation. Like all intellectuals, they are problem-solvers, and they attempt continually to analyse and interpret themselves and the world. The tragedy of the intellectual is the tragedy of the contemplative mind. The character of the intellectual could be interpreted as a unifying force in the work of Frisch. In this chapter it is proposed to analyse the basic characteristics of the intellectual and his situation as it is presented in Frisch's work and point out how this figure is related to the theme of the couple.<sup>1</sup>

### The Intellectual and the Couple

The concept of the intellectual is important in the analysis of the couple because a great deal of Frisch's work is devoted to the depiction of the relationship between the intellectual



and a woman. The figure of the intellectual is inseparable from the problem of guilt. The success or failure of a character in Frisch's work is measured not only by his material success but also by what he achieves in the personal sphere. Hannes Kürmann is a successful scientist ("eigentlich fehlt in Ihrer Biografie nur noch der Ruf nach Princeton",<sup>2</sup> remarks the Registrar), but he lacks the capacity for a lasting relationship with Antoinette Stein. In fact, a whole list of examples illustrating Kürmann's guilt in the matter of personal relationships is catalogued during the course of Biografie e.g. Kürmann's childhood friend who lost an eye as a result of Kürmann's violence (in throwing a snowball), his wife Katrin (who committed suicide when their marriage turned out badly) and his relationships with his parents, Helen in America and his son Thomas. Stiller is a moderately successful sculptor, but he is unable to establish a permanent relationship with Julika. Walter Faber has attained a well-paid and responsible position with UNESCO, but his personal relations with Ivy (and earlier with Hanna) result only in unhappiness. The intellectual in Frisch's work is thus inadequate in the field of personal relationships. This inadequacy is characterized by a conscious withdrawal on the part of the intellectual from any lasting relationship ("Menschen sind eine Anstrengung für mich",<sup>3</sup> as Walter Faber puts it). Kürmann's efforts in Biografie are directed principally towards avoiding any kind of relationship with Antoinette (his goal is described as



"Biografie ohne Antoinette"<sup>4</sup>). His inadequacy in such relationships is indicated by his statement: "Wenn ich schon die Genehmigung habe, dann überhaupt keine Geschichte mit einer Frau".<sup>5</sup> The intellectual in Frisch's work is in a permanent state of flight from other people, which links the work of Frisch with the "outsider" theme which has fascinated so many writers of this century.<sup>6</sup> The study of how this situation comes about demonstrates the role of the intellectual in the problem of interpersonal relations in Frisch's work.

#### The Experience of Time

The starting point for the analysis of the intellectual in the work of Frisch is the experience of passing time. The intellectual struggles to come to terms with the concept of time and to understand the nature of time. Frisch writes of Enderlin in Gantenbein: "Es verwirrt ihn nur, daß heute nicht gestern ist."<sup>7</sup> Time and space are the two essential criteria of existence ("Leben sei Gestalt in der Zeit" as Hanna puts it) and the intellectual in Frisch's work is characterized by an extreme awareness of the constant passage of time. He realizes the fleeting and ephemeral nature of his existence (Frisch writes in Die Schwierigen: "Unser Dasein ist kurz wie ein Tag ..."<sup>8</sup>). The intellectual's awareness of time is illustrated by the parable of the peasant lad in Die Schwierigen:

"Er stemmt seinen Fuß auf einen Baumstamm und klopft sich die

Pfeife aus, Gerätschaft des Erwachsenen. Wenn er sie wieder gestopft hat, sind Jahre vergangen, man weiß nicht wie; die Vögel zwitschern noch immer, aber es sind Jahre vergangen."<sup>9</sup>

Characters in Frisch's work often express a horrified consciousness of how quickly their life is slipping away as they travel inevitably from youth to age, from life to death.<sup>10</sup> Manfred Jurgensen has shown how the imagery of night in Frisch's plays represents the nothingness of death which awaits man. He writes: "Stets verkörpert die Nacht das Bewußtsein zeitlicher und räumlicher Begrenzung alles Lebendigen."<sup>11</sup> Frisch's characters are aware that they have only a little time before they are engulfed by "die kosmische Nacht des Nichts".<sup>12</sup> The intellectual resents this passage of time and the process of growing old (as does Enderlin who attempts continually to reassure himself that he is still young). It is suggested in Homo Faber that Walter Faber took up a career as a "Techniker" out of a desire to deny the passage of time by denying the value of life (he writes: "Mein Irrtum: daß wir Techniker versuchen, ohne den Tod zu leben"<sup>13</sup>). Yet there is no defence against time and the approach of old age (as Frisch writes in Gantenbein: "Es gibt keine Hoffnung gegen die Zeit"<sup>14</sup>).

Concerning Enderlin Frisch writes:

"Und es wird kommen, was er befürchtet: daß man ihm mit Respekt begegnet. Respekt vor seinen Jahren. Man wird ihn sprechen lassen, weil er älter ist, und da hilft keine Kameraderie, kein Buhlen um die Jungen. Sie werden immer jünger. Sie hören aus Höflichkeit zu und sagen immer seltener, was sie denken. All dies wird kommen."<sup>15</sup>

The concept of "Wiederholung" ("dieser Fluch der Wiederholung"<sup>16</sup> as it is described in Die Schwierigen) can also be interpreted as an aspect of this preoccupation with time. An individual would be oblivious of the passing of time if there were no experience of familiarity or recognition from which to perceive the flow of time. A person recognizes change and hence the passing of time by finding himself in a situation he has experienced before and noting how it (or he) has altered. Without this element of "repetition" in the experience of life (situations, feelings, experiences which occur again and again, each time in a slightly different form) the very concept of time would be meaningless. Such a situation of repetition is depicted in the story of the peasant lad in Die Schwierigen. The element of familiarity in this episode is provided by nature ("die Vögel zwitschern noch immer, aber es sind Jahre vergangen"<sup>17</sup>).

The fear and resentment of the intellectual in the face of passing time has a direct effect on the theme of the couple. A continuing relationship with another individual must inevitably introduce the element of time through the constant repetition of situations. Thus a permanent human relationship presents the intellectual with the very experience he would like to avoid. Enderlin is prepared to indulge in brief, passing affairs, since these do not contain any element of time. However, even a second meeting would introduce the element of "Wiederholung". Frisch

writes of Enderlin and Svoboda's wife: "Sie wollten, was nur einmal möglich ist: das Jetzt."<sup>18</sup> The question of a permanent relationship does not even arise for Enderlin, since to him this represents the confronting of the individual with a mirror of his own predicament. This would result in the (for him) intolerable situation of seeing the effect of the passage of time on him reflected in his partner.

"Denn die Zukunft, das wußte er, das bin ich, ihr Gatte, ich bin die Wiederholung, die Geschichte, die Endlichkeit und der Fluch in allem, ich bin das Altern von Minute zu Minute ..."<sup>19</sup>

#### The Problem of Choice

The importance of an individual's awareness of passing time is that it causes him to place great stress on his choice of a way of life. The intellectual's extreme awareness of time causes him to be obsessed with finding the best possible way of using the time he possesses. This situation forms the basis of the cancer motif which often appears in Frisch's work. Frisch seems to be fascinated by this theme since Kürmann, Walter Faber and Enderlin are all victims of cancer.<sup>20</sup> In the case of Enderlin Frisch demonstrates how the situation of the cancer victim results in the same consciousness of time which characterizes the intellectual. When Enderlin believes that he is to die of cancer within a year he is confronted directly and dramatically with the problem of limited time. He says: "Was tut ein Mann meines Alters, wenn er weiß oder zu wissen meint, daß er nach ärztlichem Ermessen noch ein



Jahr zu leben hat, bestenfalls ein Jahr?"<sup>21</sup> Enderlin is faced with the decision as to how he should spend his year. The answer to his question is both simple and complex: "--leben ... aber wie?"<sup>22</sup>

The problem of choice is complicated by the intellectual's insight into the absurdity of the ritual of daily life. He recognizes the poverty of the lives led by most of the people around him. This gives rise to the conflict between the bourgeois and the intellectual which figures prominently in Frisch's work. The intellectual is not satisfied with the repetitive everyday life which surrounds him. The Staatsanwalt in Graf Öderland, for instance, says of a cashier who committed murder:

"... vierzehn Jahre an der Kasse, Monat um Monat, Woche um Woche, Tag für Tag, ein Mann, der seine Pflicht erfüllt wie wir alle. Schau ihn an! Ein Mensch ohne Laster, alle Zeugen bestätigen es, ein stiller und friedlicher Mieter, ... ein geradezu vorbildlicher Angestellter. Es gibt Augenblicke, wo man sich wundert über alle, die keine Axt ergreifen."<sup>23</sup>

A similar point is made in Die Schwierigen, where Frisch mentions the futility of the daily routine of work. He writes:

"Es ist das Dasein der meisten: ein Dasein von Sklaven, die sich freuen, daß schon wieder ein Monat ihres Lebens vorüber ist. Man könnte sie grausamerweise fragen, wozu sie denn leben? Sie tun es aus purer Angst vor dem Sterben, nichts weiter."<sup>24</sup>

### The Lure of the Exotic

The intellectual's obsession with choosing the best way to spend his time gives rise to a fascination with the exotic.<sup>25</sup> He is attracted by a mystical, idyllic image of Paradise or a



perfect way of life involving the fullest experience of existence. Many of the central characters in Frisch's work are haunted by a vision of "das andere Leben", a sensual and more profound experience of life. This aspect of Frisch's work is already evident in his first play Santa Cruz, which is a study of the effect of the exotic on the human personality. The characters of the Rittmeister and Pelegrin in this play can be interpreted as representing two facets of one personality. Pelegrin is an embodiment of the Rittmeister's yearning for "das andere Leben".<sup>26</sup> He tempts the Rittmeister ("ein Mann der Ordnung"<sup>27</sup>) away from his wife and family to join him in the search for adventure. The picture of the intellectual which thus emerges in the play is that of an individual who is being torn apart by conflicting inner pressures. He wants both the freedom of the life represented by Pelegrin and the secure domesticity of the Rittmeister. The two, however, are incompatible with one another. Pelegrin remarks: "Man kann nicht beides haben, scheint es. Der eine hat das Meer, der andere das Schloß: der eine hat Hawai--der andere das Kind."<sup>28</sup>

One of the most fundamental aspects of "das andere Leben" is expressed in the motif of travel. The intellectual has a vision of a footloose, vagrant existence, a life of freedom to wander wherever he wishes, "ohne Ziel und Zeit".<sup>29</sup> This vision is presented in the character of Pelegrin (literally "Pilgrim"<sup>30</sup>) the "Vagant" ("wanderer") who spends his life drifting around the

world looking for adventure. The motif of travel is also the basis of Frisch's imagery of the sea. The Rittmeister says:

"Noch einmal das Meer ... Begreifst du was ich meine? Noch einmal die Weite alles Möglichen: nicht wissen, was der nächste Augenblick bringt".<sup>31</sup>

Manfred Jurgensen writes in his analysis of the imagery in Frisch's work: "Aber zweifellos soll das Meer zugleich auch als Symbol der menschlichen Sehnsucht schlechthin erkannt werden".<sup>32</sup>

The sea beckons the intellectual to travel, to escape the monotony of everyday life. Jurgensen writes:

"Für fast alle Frisch - Charaktere bedeutet der Kontakt mit dem Meer einen Ausbruch aus der Routine einer tödlichen Ordnung. Ihre Freiheit besteht darin, den Gesetzen des Lebens und sich selber zu folgen".<sup>33</sup>

"Das andere Leben" is also a life of sensual experience.

The intellectual envisages the exotic as an increased awareness of being alive, a heightened consciousness of reality. The

Rittmeister says: "Ich möchte noch einmal fühlen, welche Gnade es ist, daß ich lebe, in diesem Atemzug lebe - bevor es uns einschneit für immer".<sup>34</sup>

The intellectual strives to live his life at the highest possible level of awareness of himself and the world around him.

"Das andere Leben" represents for him a life of sensuality and rapturous delight in the perception of the world. This attitude is the basis of some of Frisch's most lyrical prose, one of the most striking examples of which is Walter Faber's Cuban experience in

Homo Faber:

"Licht der Blitze; nachher ist man wie blind, einen Augenblick lang hat man gesehen: die schwefelgrünen Palme im Sturm, Wolken, violett mit der bläulichen Schweißbrennerglut, das Meer, das flatternde Wellblech, meine kindliche Freude daran, meine Wollust - ich singe".<sup>35</sup>

"Das klare Wasser, man sieht den Meeresgrund, ich schwimme mit dem Gesicht im Wasser, damit ich den Meeresgrund sehe; mein eigener Schatten auf dem Meeresgrund: ein violetter Frosch".<sup>36</sup>

Passages such as these illustrate the intellectual's vision of man revelling in the joy of sensual experience. In the exotic situation visual images are more striking ("Licht der Blitze; nachher ist man wie blind, einen Augenblick lang hat man gesehen"<sup>37</sup>), colours are brighter and more vibrant ("die schwefelgrünen Palme im Sturm",<sup>38</sup> "die rote Blume ihrer Munde"<sup>39</sup>), sounds are more insistent and penetrating ("der Wasserfall ist lauter als alles Gedonner"<sup>40</sup>). Life is portrayed as a wild, ecstatic affair, the simple act of living produces a carnival atmosphere ("alles wie verrückt",<sup>41</sup> as Faber says). The inhabitants of Cuba are depicted as devoting their lives to the unrestrained pursuit of pleasure ("alles spaziert, alles lacht"<sup>42</sup>). Faber is fascinated by the overwhelming delight in simply existing which characterizes people in this setting ("Meine Lust, jetzt und hier zu sein"<sup>43</sup>). This state of being epitomizing the intellectual's vision of the exotic has a dream-like quality ("Alles wie Traum"<sup>44</sup>) which points out the unreality of the situation and its status as a manifestation of "Sehnsucht".

The exotic is closely linked with the theme of South

America in the work of Frisch. South America is the setting for much of the action in Frisch's novels and plays. Homo Faber is set partly in Guatemala, Cuba and Mexico, "Santa Cruz" is the typical name of a South American city or island, Stiller dreams longingly of Mexico and Enderlin of Peru. It is here that the intellectual hopes to find "das andere Leben". Frisch writes of Enderlin: "Peru, sagt er, sei das Land seiner Hoffnung".<sup>45</sup> To Frisch's intellectual the mere mention of South America conjures up exotic images of tropical fruit, clear waters and the lush vegetation of the "Urwald". Frisch portrays repeatedly the simple, unadorned life of the South American Indian,<sup>46</sup> which contrasts strongly with the urban technological existence of the intellectual. The Indians lead an unhurried, contented life, which the intellectual lacks, in a land dominated by peace and tranquillity ("ringsum nichts als Stille",<sup>47</sup> as Stiller describes it). South America is the place where the intellectual imagines he can attain the richest and fullest experience of life, since it is a land of tropical sweetness (as illustrated by imagery of fruit and flowers<sup>48</sup>), exuberant happiness (as is portrayed in Faber's Cuban experience) and also an awareness of the cruelty of life and the nearness of death as represented by the heat, the desert and the sinister "Zopilote" which feature prominently in Frisch's South American descriptions ("die großen stinkenden Vögel",<sup>49</sup> as Stiller describes them).



This theme of the exotic has a direct bearing on the analysis of the couple in Frisch's work since the "Sehnsucht" of the intellectual can contribute to the downfall of a marriage (as is shown in Santa Cruz, where the yearning for the exotic endangers the relationship between the Rittmeister and his wife). The relationship between Pelegrin and Elvira in Santa Cruz also demonstrates the disruptive effect of the intellectual's dreams of the exotic. Pelegrin must sacrifice marriage and domesticity to his need to pursue the image of the exotic. He says: "Elvira, ich kann nicht heiraten. Ich kann das nicht".<sup>50</sup> Pelegrin realizes that if he were to marry he would not be happy. Although he loves Elvira, marriage would destroy that love. He comments: "Die Ehe ist ein Sarg für die Liebe".<sup>51</sup> His dream of the exotic would come between him and Elvira. He would resent her for preventing him from travelling in search of the exotic. He says: "Ich werde in deinem Hause sitzen, dir zuliebe, aber meine Sehnsucht wird gegen dich sein".<sup>52</sup> Pelegrin leaves Elvira because the permanent state of marriage is incompatible with the exotic dreams and "Wanderlust" of the intellectual.<sup>53</sup>

The yearning for the exotic is of course nothing but a dream. A new way of life such as the intellectual longs for cannot be brought about by a simple change in geographical location. Pelegrin is aware of this, as is shown by his parable in Santa Cruz:

"Ich kenne eine Muschel, die es nicht gibt, eine Muschel, die man nur denken kann, so schön ist sie, und wenn man an allen Küsten streifte und tausend Muscheln eröffnete, alle zusammen: nie sind sie so schön wie die Muschel, die ich mir denken kann".<sup>54</sup>

This parable illustrates how an image of perfection ("die man nur denken kann") can never be reconcilable with an aspect of an imperfect reality. Yet the intellectual continues to be haunted by dreams of the exotic and cannot give up the hope that he may find "das Land seiner Hoffnung".<sup>55</sup> The destiny of Frisch's intellectual seems to be the agony of a "Sehnsucht" which can never be fulfilled.

#### The Role of Schicksal

It is characteristic of the intellectual in Frisch's work that he is continually dissatisfied with reality. He refuses to accept that the way of life he actually leads is the only possible one. He thus denies the influence on his life of any concept of fate. The intellectual regrets the past constantly, believing that what has occurred could have been different and that he could have led "ein anderes Leben". The Rittmeister in Santa Cruz, for instance, says: "All das hier - ich glaube nicht mehr, daß es für mich das einzig mögliche Leben gewesen sei."<sup>56</sup> He believes that "das andere Leben" represented by Pelegrin could actually have been his own. He says: "Ich möchte sehen, wie mein Leben hätte aussehen können".<sup>57</sup> Similarly, Walter Faber's lament is: "wenn man nochmals leben könnte".<sup>58</sup> He believes that if he were given an opportunity to live his life again it could turn out differently. He says:

"Wieso Fügung! Es hätte auch ganz anders kommen können".<sup>59</sup> In Biografie Hannes Kürmann (literally "one who chooses") is given such an opportunity. He is allowed to make again any of the decisions which resulted in the facts of his biography. Kürmann is a "Verhaltensforscher" and the whole play can be interpreted as an experiment in human behaviour to discover whether Kürmann is in fact capable of making a different set of decisions and thus altering the outcome of his life, or whether the decisions which he made were the only ones he could have made. The play is concerned with the analysis of the couple since the main area in which Kürmann attempts to alter his behaviour is in the field of interpersonal relations, and particularly his unhappy relationship with Antoinette Stein.

Kürmann asserts that he is absolutely free to choose any one of the various possible courses of action in a given situation. He claims that the facts of his biography (including whether or not he courts and marries Antoinette) are not fixed, but are a matter entirely of his choice. He says:

"Ich weigere mich zu glauben, daß unsere Biografie, meine oder irgendeine, nicht anders aussehen könnte. Vollkommen anders. Ich brauche mich nur ein einziges Mal anders zu verhalten ... ganz zu schweigen vom Zufall!"<sup>60</sup>

Kürmann thus rejects determinism completely. He regards his biography (the sum total of his decisions and their consequences) as entirely a matter of his own choice. He says:

"sie (unsere Biografie) ist nur eine mögliche, eine von vielen, die ebenso möglich wären unter denselben gesellschaftlichen

und geschichtlichen Bedingungen und mit derselben Anlage der Person."<sup>61</sup>

He is given the opportunity in the play to put this belief to the test, but he repeatedly makes exactly the same choice as he had made previously ("Warum machen Sie immer dasselbe?"<sup>62</sup> asks the Registrar). In fact, Kürmann is only able to change two minor incidents in his life:- he refrains from hitting his wife and he joins the Communist Party (an action which he admits himself is not out of ideological conviction but simply in order to change a fact of his biography). It is possible to argue that these two decisions do not change his biography in any real sense because they do not affect his relations with others, which is the area in which he has failed. Although Kürmann decides not to hit his wife, his marriage is still not successful, and although he loses his appointment as Professor because he joins the Communist Party, his relations with the people around him remain unchanged. (It is even suggested in the play that his ambition may have resulted from his resentment at the mockery of his fellow schoolboys when he boasted he would be a Professor one day). Neither of these decisions help him to achieve his aim of "Biografie ohne Antoinette" or to improve his relations with Antoinette. The fact that Kürmann is continually unable to change the course of his life when he has the opportunity suggests that his choice is predetermined.

An insight into the nature of "Schicksal" in the play is



provided by an analysis of the role of the Registrar. This character does not intervene in the action of the play, nor does he make Kürmann's decisions for him. He does, however, point out to Kürmann that he must obey certain rules when making his decisions. Kürmann maintains that he has perfect freedom of choice. The Registrar admits that no-one can determine Kürmann's course of action, but insists that allowance must be made for certain inhibiting factors. The concept of "Schicksal" in the play is contained in the necessary adherence to such "Spielregel".

There are three basic rules which the Registrar lays down as being incumbent on Kürmann in choosing his behaviour. Firstly, Kürmann cannot alter external events which are necessarily beyond his control. This limitation is illustrated by another aspect of the cancer motif. When Kürmann becomes a victim of cancer this is not a matter of choice. He is in effect sentenced to death and the question of his choice in the matter does not arise. There is nothing he can do. It is not inconceivable that circumstances might come about under which cancer could be affected by Kürmann's action, but until then he is helpless. The Registrar says: "In zehn Jahren vielleicht, wer weiß, oder schon in einem Jahr gibt es ein Heilmittel, aber jetzt ist es noch Schicksal".<sup>63</sup> The cancer motif represents the forces of "Schicksal" under which every individual must act. It does not deny Kürmann any choice whatsoever. Even under sentence of death he is still free to choose

his behaviour to some degree. When he asks the Registrar in what sense he is still free he is told he can still choose "wie Sie sich dazu verhalten, daß Sie verloren sind".<sup>64</sup> Nevertheless, Kürmann must accept the restrictions imposed on his action by an external fate of this kind. In the matter of his relationship with Antoinette this form of "Schicksal" still applies. The circumstances of their meeting (at a surprise party given for Kürmann to celebrate his professorship) are such that he cannot avoid it. He can alter his behaviour towards her when they meet, but he cannot refuse to meet her.<sup>65</sup>

The second manner in which Kürmann must acknowledge the influence of "Schicksal" is in the matter of the actions of others. "Was Sie wählen können, ist ihr eigenes Verhalten",<sup>66</sup> says the Registrar. Kürmann cannot determine the behaviour of others. He can decide how he will behave towards them, but their response to this behaviour is for them to decide. Each person has the same right to determine his choice of action that Kürmann has. In terms of the chess motif Kürmann cannot determine the moves of his partner. In Kürmann's relationship with Antoinette this means that he cannot decide that she must not remain behind after the party finishes. He is still responsible for his behaviour towards her, but he cannot determine her actions so he cannot avoid this encounter ("das können Sie nicht ändern",<sup>67</sup> as the Registrar points out).

The third but most important of the Registrar's

"Spielregel" is the fact that Kürmann cannot change his personality. He must choose in accordance with his intelligence and personality traits. The Registrar says: "Sie haben die Genehmigung nochmals zu wählen, aber mit der Intelligenz, die Sie nun einmal haben. Die ist gegeben".<sup>68</sup> Kürmann must make any choice from the standpoint of his own self and cannot deny his personality. This condition of action demonstrates the impasse of the situation in which the intellectual in Frisch's work finds himself. He maintains that he has absolute freedom of choice in the determination of his behaviour, which implies that he also claims the right to choose the self or identity which chooses his behaviour. He will not even recognize the restrictions which his personality places on his possible identity. Yet if an individual does not use the criteria of his own personality traits to define his identity, there are no other possible criteria which he can use. It is impossible for the self to exist except as the sum total of the constituents of the self (i.e. Kürmann cannot be making decisions without reference to his own personality, since Kürmann without his personality would no longer be Kürmann). Thus by asserting his complete freedom of choice in determining his identity, the intellectual is in fact denying his identity. Such a desire of the self to transcend itself and make decisions from some theoretical standpoint other than the self, is the height of intellectual arrogance.

The Registrar points out to Kürmann that he is placing

himself in an impossible position which denies its own premises. The Registrar suggests that an individual should accept the limitations imposed on him by his personality and recognize that he does not in fact have the complete freedom of choice which Kürmann claims. This requires that he accept that what has occurred was the only thing which could have occurred. Kürmann comments:

"Und dieser Sinn würde darin bestehen, daß ich glaube: So und nicht anders hat es kommen müssen. Was man niemals beweisen kann, aber glauben. So und nicht anders. Schicksal. Vorsehung."<sup>69</sup>

It is worthy of note that twenty years elapsed between the writing of Santa Cruz and Biografie yet a similar conclusion is suggested in the earlier play. The poet Pedro in Santa Cruz plays a similar role to the Registrar in Biografie. When the Rittmeister asks why he cannot lead the vagrant life of Pelegrin, the poet replies:

"Weil keiner ein anderes Leben hätte führen können als jenes, das er führte ... Das ist es, was ich Ihnen wahrsage: Auch wenn Sie noch einmal, später vielleicht und nach vielen Jahren, nach Santa Cruz kommen und verreisen wollen, nie wird es anders sein als heute. Sie können nicht anders, Sie sind ein Edelmann."<sup>70</sup>

One cannot escape one's own "Schicksal". To accept it is the only reasonable course of action since it is impossible to escape the self.

However, it is a facet of the personality of the intellectual in the work of Frisch that he cannot accept the reality of his situation, but searches constantly for a means to the new reality of "das andere Leben". This is the basic criterion for the



definition of the intellectual in the sense in which he occurs in Frisch's work. The intellectual is thus faced with a "personality spiral". It is his fate to be in perpetual conflict with himself. He is enslaved by the restless dissatisfaction with reality and yearning for the exotic which are an essential part of his personality. In Die Schwierigen Frisch writes: "Niemand kann aus seiner Haut heraus".<sup>71</sup> This illustrates the paradox of the intellectual's situation. It is impossible to escape the self, but it is also impossible for the intellectual to escape the desire to escape the self. It is the insatiable craving to reach a new reality which imprisons him. Stiller says: "Diese Hoffnung ist mein Gefängnis".<sup>72</sup> He is a perpetual victim of the hope that he may attain his ideal self which will experience "das andere Leben". Rodney Livingstone writes of this ideal self in Frisch's work: "It is an ideal which constantly recurs in Frisch in one form or another as an escape from the tedium and spiritual deprivations of modern life. He (Frisch) sees clearly that it is a daydream, and yet he cannot stop dreaming it. Almost all his works are an attempt to exorcise precisely this dream."<sup>73</sup> In this sense the situation of the intellectual in Frisch's work is fundamentally tragic. He is "sentenced" to his situation (against which he struggles in vain) not by an external deity, but by an internal personality trait (or "Tödsunde"<sup>74</sup> as Walter Faber calls it) which recalls the tragic personality flaw often given as an explanation of the cause of

tragedy. This may explain the Greek motifs which recur in Frisch's work. Parts of both Die Schwierigen and Homo Faber are set in Greece, the home of tragedy, and Kürmann and Antoinette travel together in Greece. There are a number of references in Homo Faber to Greek art and mythology<sup>75</sup> (Frisch links Faber with Oedipus<sup>76</sup>) and Enderlin is preparing a lecture on Hermes, the courier of the Greek gods and hence bearer of the dictates of fate. Part of the "Schicksal" of the intellectual is his failure in the area of interpersonal relations. His desire to realize his dreams of the exotic affect his relationships with others. As Pelegrin points out, the search for adventure and the domestic life represented by "das Schloß" are mutually exclusive: "Man kann nicht beides haben, scheint es. Der eine hat das Meer, der andere das Schloß: der eine hat Hawai - der andere das Kind".<sup>76</sup> In terms of the chess motif the intellectual could be said to have placed himself in check and put an end to the game.<sup>77</sup>

CHAPTER 3 - A WILDERNESS OF MIRRORS

The Mirror Motif

Michael Bullock gave his translation of Gantenbein the title A Wilderness of Mirrors.<sup>1</sup> This title is very appropriate since it emphasizes Frisch's preoccupation with problems of images and roles. Frisch portrays in his novels and a number of his plays the predicament of an individual who is lost in the maze of images he has of himself (or roles he assumes) and the images he projects onto others. Frisch uses the motif of the mirror in his work to point out such images. The mirror image represents the relationship between reality and illusion and is used extensively in this sense by a number of existentialist writers.<sup>2</sup> This motif occurs in Gantenbein where Frisch describes how Enderlin confronts himself when he sees his reflection in a mirror.

"Das einzige Gesicht in dieser Bar, das ihn ab und zu beobachtete, war sein eigenes im Spiegel hinter Flaschen, ein schmales Gesicht mit Hornbrille und Bürstenschnitt. Er wußte nicht, was den Frauen manchmal daran gefällt. Nur die beiden wassergrauen Augen - sie blickten aus dem Spiegel, als wären sie wirklich dort im Spiegel, sein Körper aber außerhalb des Spiegels - sind so, daß er sich darin erkennt ..."<sup>3</sup>

The reflection in a mirror could be interpreted as representing the phantasy image which an individual can make of himself, since the mirror image seems real but is only an illusion. The narrator of Gantenbein refers to the roles he can assume and likens them to sets of clothes. "(Ich) drehe mich vor den

verstellbaren Spiegeln, um den Schnitt zu prüfen, der mir im Schaufenster einigermaßen gefallen hat."<sup>4</sup> The mirror image, a faithful reproduction of the real object, can also be interpreted as demonstrating the impossibility of ever escaping the reality of oneself. When one looks into a mirror one comes face to face with oneself and cannot avoid the truth about one's own features. For this reason, Walter Faber has an aversion to mirrors: "Außer beim Rasieren pflege ich nicht in den Spiegel zu schauen; ich kämme mich ohne Spiegel, trotzdem weiß man, wie man aussieht."<sup>5</sup> Faber is attempting to escape from himself by adopting the role of "Techniker" and the mirror represents this self which he can never avoid entirely. The mirror motif is also related to the theme of the couple since the other can act as a kind of mirror to an individual. A person's self-image is reflected in the other in the sense that he needs the other to confirm the role in which he sees himself. The paradoxical situation thus arises in which the individual needs the other to reflect his self-image, but the other can thereby reveal this self-image as illusory.

### Images of the Self

One of the most prominent forms of images found in the work of Frisch is the phantasy image which an individual has of himself. This plays an important role in the failure of personal relationships throughout Frisch's work, but is demonstrated most clearly in the one-act play Die große Wut des Philipp Hotz. This



play is lighter and more humorous than much of Frisch's work, but has as its subject the serious theme of the break-down of a marriage. Philipp Hotz locks his wife in the wardrobe, then proceeds to smash up his flat before running away to join the Foreign Legion. The play shows clearly the false image which Hotz has of himself. From his actions and what his wife says about him the reader can get an idea of Hotz' real nature. He is a precise and analytical thinker, as is shown by his careful calculation of the rate of adultery among his acquaintances:

"Madame, ich habe mir die Mühe genommen, die durchschnittliche Anzahl der Ehebrüche in meinem Freundeskreis ... zu ermitteln, wobei ich, wohlverstanden, nur Ehebrüche einsetze, die mindestens drei Unbeteiligten als zweifellos erscheinen - ich komme, Männer bis zu 50 Jahren gerechnet, auf einen ortsüblichen Durchschnitt von 5, 1607".<sup>6</sup>

Hotz' methodical, almost pedantic mode of thought is also demonstrated by the systematic way in which he goes about destroying the furnishings of the flat. He says: "Zum Beispiel die Bilder. Sie nehmen ein Küchenmesser oder was Sie grad finden, schneiden von links oben nach unten: - so".<sup>7</sup> Hotz has a pensive, introverted personality which his wife describes in the following terms:

"Philipp ist der schamhafteste Mann, den es gibt. Das geht bis zur Verlogenheit, weißt du, unter vier Augen. So schamhaft ist er".<sup>8</sup>

The image which Hotz has of himself and which he tries to live up to in the play stands in marked contrast to his real character. He attempts to overcome the inadequacies of his

introverted personality by assuming the role of an extrovert. He sees himself as a rash, impetuous man of action (a role which is epitomized for him in the romantic figure of a French legionnaire). His action in leaving his wife Dorli and smashing the flat is an attempt to assert this image before the people around him ("Man soll mich kennenlernen",<sup>9</sup> he exclaims). His story of his affair with Clarissa (which he admits to the audience is fiction) is also an attempt to project this image of a self-confident man of action. He simulates rage as he prepares to leave, but the artificial nature of this emotion is shown by the way he has to remind himself constantly not to calm down ("Nur jetzt nicht die Wut verlieren!"<sup>10</sup> is a recurring phrase). In fact, Hotz actually confesses to the audience that the mode of behaviour he is showing in the play is quite alien to his real character: "Ich habe noch nie an einem Tag soviel Unangenehmes erledigt. Ich staune selbst. Ich bin sonst kein Tatmensch ...".<sup>11</sup>

Hotz doesn't really want to join the Foreign Legion.

Indeed he is quite distressed at the thought that he might have to join. He says:

"Wenn Dorli jetzt erfährt, daß ich überhaupt keinen Ehebruch begangen habe, und wenn sie es glaubt, dann glaubt sie mir überhaupt nichts mehr! - dann muß ich wirklich gehen".<sup>12</sup>

It is not necessary for Hotz actually to join the Foreign Legion. He simply needs to be able to believe in the image of himself as a man of action, so all that is necessary is that he convince

himself that he could go if he wanted to. The presence of Dorli, however, puts this image of himself in jeopardy. She continually sees Hotz for what he really is and this acts as a threat to his self-image. The cause of the break-down of the marriage is the conflict between Hotz' view of himself and Dorli's view of him. Hotz wants Dorli to confirm the role in which he sees himself and struggles to make her believe that he is actually capable of leaving her and joining the Foreign Legion. He says: "Meine Frau treibt mich in die Fremdenlegion, denn sie traut es mir einfach nicht zu, daß ich gehe".<sup>13</sup> All that is necessary is that she believe that he might do it. This would be acknowledging the validity of his role, then his self-image would be safe.

"Wenn sie jetzt kommt, um mich zurück zu rufen, und wenn sie nur (wie in früheren Jahren) bis zur Haustür kommt - dann glaubt sie wieder, daß ich eines Tages gehe; dann ist es nicht nötig, daß ich gehe".<sup>14</sup>

The reason given by Dorli for Hotz' outburst of anger is the fact that she claimed that he would never go through with his plan. She says: "Schau ihn dir an! Bloß weil ich gesagt habe: das wirst du nicht tun, Philipp, ich kenne dich!"<sup>15</sup> Hotz is forced to return ignominiously at the end of the play when the Foreign Legion refuse to take him, but his image of himself as a man of action is secure. He has made his point and Dorli believes him capable of actually going. He has gained her complicity in his self-delusion. Yet this does not mean that the problems of the marriage are solved.

This crisis is a recurring one. It is revealed during the course of the play<sup>16</sup> that Hotz has been running off to join the Foreign Legion every spring for seven years. The suggestion could well be that this problem will persist into the foreseeable future. Sooner or later Dorli will realize once more (as she has done in the past) that the role which Hotz is attempting to play conflicts with the real nature of his character. She will again believe him incapable of leaving and the situation depicted in the play will arise again as Hotz attempts to force Dorli to acknowledge the validity of his role.

The story of Rip van Winkle which Frisch incorporates in Stiller<sup>17</sup> can also be interpreted as illustrating the need for confirmation of an individual's identity by the people around him. When Rip van Winkle returns after being asleep in the mountains for twenty years the village has altered and his friends are all dead or have moved away. He no longer has the familiar faces and places to act as a support to his identity. The villagers have a new view of Rip van Winkle as a half-wit who died years before. Confronted with this lack of confirmation of his self-image, Rip finds that he is uncertain as to his own identity. Frisch writes:

"Wer er denn selber wäre? fragte man ihn, und er besann sich. Gott weiß es, gestern noch meinte ich es zu wissen, aber heute, da ich erwacht bin, wie soll ich es wissen?"<sup>18</sup>

Eventually he realizes that the old Rip van Winkle can no longer survive in this changed environment and admits to his daughter that



her father is dead. "Endlich sagte er: Dein Vater ist tot!"<sup>19</sup>

### Images of the Other

Besides creating a phantasy image of himself, an individual can also create false images of other people. He can project an identity onto them which they do not actually possess. Frisch points out the importance he attaches to this process by his adaptation of the Second Commandment in his diary: "Du sollst dir kein Bildnis machen, heißt es, von Gott. Es dürfte auch in diesem Sinne gelten: Gott als das Lebendige in jedem Menschen, das, was nicht erfaßbar ist."<sup>20</sup> Michael Kustow writes of the importance of the theme of the "fertiges Bildnis" in Frisch's work:

"'Thou shalt make no graven image'. This void this gulf, comes upon us when those who surround us imprison us in *their* fixed image of what we are, project upon us, if only for a second, by some chance remark, by an expression that moves across their features, their graven image of what we are, really. And our anguish, our discomfort lies in our utter inability to recapture that second, to erase it and reconstitute ourselves as *we* know we are."<sup>21</sup>

It is impossible to establish a workable relationship on a basis of projection since this will lead only to misunderstanding. The kind of relationship at cross-purposes which projection can cause is illustrated by Sibylle's relationship with Stiller. Sibylle has a distorted image of Stiller which means he continually fails to live up to her expectations. She turns to Stiller when she is frustrated with her marriage to Rolf. She seeks in Stiller what she cannot find in Rolf, so the false image which she has of Stiller can be

demonstrated by contrasting some of the character traits of Rolf with those she sees in Stiller. On the occasion of Stiller's first meeting with Sibylle he is dressed as a "Maskenball-Pierrot". This gives him an air of light-hearted gaiety which is lacking in Sibylle's relationship with the straight-laced and formal Rolf. It is only later that Sibylle begins to realize that Stiller is actually a morose and bitter introvert. Frisch writes: "Je näher sie ihn kennenlernte, um so scheuer war er, ... und in Wirklichkeit, hier in seinem Atelier, war von einem kreuzfidelen Pierrot nicht mehr viel zu merken".<sup>22</sup> Sibylle is married to Rolf, paragon of middle class success (as epitomized in his position as Staatsanwalt) and Stiller appeals to her as a romantic, bohemian artist-figure. The world of art is foreign to Sibylle (she admits herself: "Du weißt, ... daß ich nichts von Kunst verstehe"<sup>23</sup>) and Stiller seems to her a typically romantic artist with his casual clothes, rough quarters and unshaven face. Stiller's free and easy existence is contrasted with Rolf's well-ordered pattern of life. Sibylle says: "Wenn Rolf jetzt nicht an seine Arbeit geht, fällt die ganze Menschheit in einen Zustand verheerender Rechtslosigkeit".<sup>24</sup> The reticent Stiller (whom Sibylle describes as "ein Mensch ohne besondere Moral"<sup>25</sup>) is contrasted favourably with Rolf with his strict moralizing (he is always lecturing her about his views on the art of marriage). The romantic, revolutionary past of Stiller may also have contributed to Sibylle's image of him. She admits that

she is of a solid middle-class background ("Tochter aus bürgerlichem Haus"<sup>26</sup>) and notices Stiller's Marxist books (her comment "etwas von dem vielgenannten Karl Marx"<sup>27</sup> shows the extent of her knowledge of Marxism). Thus Stiller emerges for Sibylle as a contrast to Rolf and represents for her the possibility of an escape from the life she is leading with Rolf, a life which she is finding ever more unbearable. Frisch writes of Stiller's studio:

"Wohin man blickte, hatte man in diesem Atelier das erregende Gefühl, jederzeit aufbrechen und ein ganz anderes Leben beginnen zu können, also genau das Gefühl, das Sibylle damals brauchte."<sup>27</sup>

It is even hinted that Sibylle may initially have regarded her affair with Stiller as part of a plan to spite Rolf (who takes her fidelity for granted) and force him into revising his attitude towards her: "Ein kreuzfideler Maskenball-Pierrot, ... das wäre just das Richtige gewesen, um Rolf, ihren selbstsicheren Gatten, einmal den schon lange nötigen Schrecken einzujagen."<sup>28</sup>

The relationship between Stiller and Sibylle reaches a turning point over the decision on whether to go to Paris together. Sibylle wants to break away from Rolf and suggests to Stiller that they go to Paris. They make plans and even get as far as the station before Stiller loses his nerve.

"Der Zug fuhr; man blieb auf dem Bahnsteig zurück mit dem Beschluß, daß Stiller zuerst nach Davos fahren würde, um mit der kranken Julika in aller Offenheit zu reden, denn anders ging es ja nicht."<sup>29</sup>

The trip is eventually postponed until autumn. When Stiller suddenly

rings up and suggests that they leave for Paris at once Sibylle is overjoyed ("Endlich schien es vorwärtszugehen!"<sup>30</sup>) but she finds out just before they are to leave that Stiller has to go to Paris to supervise the casting of one of his sculptures.

"Nun stellte sich allerdings heraus, daß Stiller 'ohnehin' nach Paris fahren mußte, nicht heute, nicht morgen, aber bald, nämlich einer Bronze wegen, die nur in Paris gegossen werden konnte."<sup>31</sup>

Sibylle realizes that she has been deluding herself with a false image of Stiller. If she were to leave, she would not be running away to spend an idyllic autumn in Paris with her lover. Stiller was going anyway and thought he might as well take her with him. She finally sees through her image of Stiller, realizing that he is not the romantic, impetuous artist-figure she took him for and she breaks off their relationship.

The relationship between Stiller and Julika also demonstrates the disastrous results of making fixed images of another person. The source of conflict in this relationship is the clash between Julika's frigidity and Stiller's desire to prove his masculinity (which goes back to his failure in the Spanish Civil War but which is manifested on a sexual level in his relationship with Julika). It is stressed in the novel that it is these particular inadequacies which bring Stiller and Julika together in the first place. Julika had always been afraid that she could not satisfy a normal man (which is the reason for her intense devotion to her



career), while Stiller had always felt that he could not satisfy a normal woman. Stiller writes in prison:

"Als Fremder hat man den Eindruck, daß diese zwei Menschen, Julika und der verschollene Stiller, auf eine unselige Weise zueinander paßten. Sie brauchten einander von ihrer Angst her. Ob zu Recht oder Unrecht, jedenfalls hatte die arme Julika eine heimliche Angst, keine Frau zu sein. Und auch Stiller, scheint es, stand damals unter einer steten Angst, in irgendeinem Sinn nicht zu genügen."<sup>32</sup>

Julika makes an image of Stiller in the sense that she expects a particular kind of role from him and is frightened and disappointed when he does not live up to her expectations. She wants him to be an undemanding husband who will not force himself upon her. It was the impression he gave of sexual inadequacy which originally attracted her to him. Frisch writes: "Dazu fehlte ihm irgend etwas, und das gefiel ihr ganz besonders an ihm".<sup>33</sup> She is pleased that he doesn't make any demands on her, as do her other admirers, but seems willing to be a passive partner, a companion contented merely with her presence.

"Und es gefiel ihr, daß dieser Mann ... nicht im mindesten eine Entschuldigung ihrerseits erwartete, wenn sie ihn fast eine Stunde lang vor dem Theater hatte stehen lassen, im Gegenteil, er entschuldigte sich seinerseits für seine Beharrlichkeit und hatte schon wieder Angst, lästig zu sein."<sup>34</sup>

Julika feels that Stiller's obvious inadequacy will mean that he will be physically undemanding, therefore she has no need to fear him as she has feared all men in the past. "Julika genoß es, eigentlich zum ersten Mal einem Mann getroffen zu haben, vor dem sie sich nicht

fürchtete".<sup>35</sup> She envisages their relationship as one of chaste innocence, like that between brother and sister. "Julika empfand ihn wie einen Bruder. Und auch das gefiel ihr."<sup>36</sup>

Stiller looks at the relationship between Julika and himself from a completely different point of view. He is not prepared to accept the role of an undemanding partner which Julika wants him to play and he wishes her to play a different role for him. He feels inferior when he is confronted with the purity and innocence of the way Julika sees herself. He says:

"Ich habe eine wunderbare Frau, ich freue mich jedesmal auf das Wiedersehen, und jedesmal, wenn sie da ist, komme ich mir vor wie ein öliger, verschwitzter, stinkiger Fischer mit einer Kristallinen Wasserfee!"<sup>37</sup>

Stiller is obsessed with the desire to prove his manhood, to establish his self-image as a man of action. His relationship with Julika is a desperate search for confirmation of this self-image. He wants her to acknowledge his manhood and interprets her every action in the light of this aim. Julika often reproaches him for his "Ich-Bezogenheit" ("Stiller bezog immer alles auf sich!",<sup>38</sup> writes Frisch) since he sees every rebuff as a personal affront. When Julika claims she is too tired to receive his advances, Stiller sees this as a direct comment on his masculinity. Frisch writes: "Nur Stiller glaubte immer, daß Julika bloß müde für ihn sei".<sup>39</sup> This situation illustrates the misunderstanding which arises when behaviour is interpreted in accordance with pre-conceived images of

the identity of the other. Stiller interprets Julika's behaviour as evidence that the motives he attributes to her are true. He sees her behaviour in one way, whereas she sees it in another. For instance, when Julika does not participate in Stiller's discussions on sculpture with his friends, Stiller's attitude is as follows:

"er deutete es als Mangel an Teilnahme, kam nie auch nur auf den Gedanken, daß es von Julika, die nun einmal nichts von Bildhauerei verstand, eine nur natürliche Bescheidenheit war, ganz zu schweigen von ihrer nun einmal sehr verhaltenen und scheuen Art überhaupt."<sup>40</sup>

The picture of this relationship which emerges in Stiller is one of a constant struggle for dominance between man and woman. Each tries desperately to force the other to accept the image he projects on him as they attempt to compel one another to play the role each expects from the other. The bitterness of this struggle is shown by Frisch's use of military expressions such as "Waffenstillstand",<sup>41</sup> "Minenfeld",<sup>42</sup> "Stiller streckte schon die Waffen",<sup>43</sup> etc. Domestic issues become skirmishes between the partners. Julika, for instance, grasps at any opportunity to force Stiller to leave her alone. When she learns she has tuberculosis she uses this as a weapon to "blackmail" Stiller into keeping his distance. Frisch writes: "Julika war nun einmal ein zartes, ein besonders zartes Geschöpf; deswegen liebte sie ihren Stiller ja nicht weniger. Nur mußte er, wie gesagt, etwas Verständnis haben".<sup>44</sup> To Stiller it seems almost as if she had invented her illness simply to give herself an excuse

for rejecting him. "Man konnte versucht sein, nicht einmal ihre ärztlich beglaubigte und in ihrem Leben so ungeheuer kostspielige Tuberkulose ganz zu glauben".<sup>45</sup> The violence and self-inflicted misery of this relationship is aptly summed up by Stiller's dream in which he and Julika crucify one another.<sup>46</sup>

The tragedy of this situation is that it perpetuates itself and forms a downward spiral of ever-increasing misunderstanding. Stiller tries to force Julika to play a role which is against her nature and when he fails he looks for proof of his masculinity elsewhere. Julika then feels inadequate when he rejects her so she desperately tries to play the role of a flirt. "Es war nach einem Ball, Julika eine grazile Bacchantin, die bald da, bald dort auf den Knien eines Herrn saß und nicht aufhören konnte, sich als 'tolle Frau' aufzuspielen."<sup>47</sup> Stiller becomes jealous and feels that this behaviour of Julika's is a further proof of his lack of masculinity since his wife seems to find other men attractive, but not him. He begins to spend more time in his studio and with Sibylle, becoming even more withdrawn and bitter with Julika. It is this behaviour by Stiller which provokes Julika into beginning a superficial relationship with an advertising agent ("Stiller trieb sie dazu",<sup>48</sup> comments Frisch). The result of this is that Stiller feels even more jealous and inadequate. Frisch writes:

"Der fliegende Reklameberater blieb für ihn (Stiller) der große Mann, der Julika glücklich zu machen vermochte; davon war Stiller nun einmal vom ersten Schrecken an überzeugt, blind für die Tatsache, daß seine Julika durchaus unverändert blieb".<sup>49</sup>



This spiral ends only with the complete destruction of the relationship between Stiller and Julika at the sanatorium in Davos.

The social implications of the process of making images of others are brought out in Frisch's play Andorra. In this work prejudices are analysed as cases of people applying fixed images to an individual. Andri, the illegitimate son of a teacher, has been brought up as a Jewish refugee from the land of the "Blacks" to prevent the truth about his father's past being disclosed. The people of Andorra therefore categorize him as a Jew, although he is actually of the same racial origin as themselves. They apply to him a stereotyped image of what a Jew is. Qualities such as cowardice, lechery and miserliness are applied to Andri not because he is seen to possess these qualities, but because he is believed to possess another characteristic, that of being a Jew. This image is applied by the Andorrans totally without reference to reality. Thus the carpenter to whom Andri is apprenticed cannot accept that Andri could have made an excellent chair, but wants to make him serve in the shop because this is where Andri's talents must be most effective.

Frisch exposes the hypocrisy of the patronizing tolerance of the Andorrans through his skill in manipulating the language of his characters. The innkeeper, for instance, who always treats Andri kindly and even protects him from the other Andorrans to some degree, acknowledges that the general image of Jews applies even

if it is invalid in Andri's case. He says: "Hab ich nicht bei jeder Gelegenheit gesagt, Andri ist eine Ausnahme?"<sup>50</sup> He is thus in the paradoxical position of maintaining that the universal image applies, but that there are exceptions. Similarly, when the priest denies the validity of the Andorrans' fixed image of Andri, he makes the underlying assumption that a category such as they postulate actually exists. He says to Andri:

"Was immer euch widerfährt in diesem Leben, alles und jedes bezieht ihr nur darauf, daß ihr Jud seid. Ihr macht es einem wirklich nicht leicht mit eurer Überempfindlichkeit".<sup>51</sup>

This superficially tolerant statement is based on the premise that Jews are over-sensitive, which is itself a prejudice.

The creation of false images by the people of Andorra is directly responsible for the death of Andri. They not only destroy him physically, but also destroy his individuality and personal identity or "das Lebendige in jedem Menschen"<sup>52</sup> as Frisch describes it. The Andorrans interpret Andri's behaviour in accordance with their image of him. When he makes a simple gesture which anyone could make (such as rubbing his hands together) this is immediately interpreted as proof that the image the Andorrans have of him is correct. Andri eventually has to accept the image the others have of him. He says: "Ich muß reich werden ..., weil ich Jud bin".<sup>53</sup> He must accept their image because his behaviour does correspond to their criteria. By a perverted logic he is forced to acknowledge the validity of this image. When the others exclude him from their

society by saying he is different, he has to admit that he doesn't fit in, so he must indeed be different. He says: "Immer muß ich denken, ob's wahr ist, was die andern von mir sagen: daß ich nicht bin wie sie, nicht fröhlich, nicht gemütlich, nicht einfach so".<sup>54</sup>

In the draft of the play contained in his diary Frisch writes of the young man: "er prüfte sich, bis er entdeckte, daß es stimmte".<sup>55</sup>

The Andorrans destroy Andri's identity by applying their image to him until eventually his real self ceases to exist. The image of all the Andorrans put together is too powerful for Andri to assert his own identity against it and he begins to have doubts about his real self. He says:

"Man hat mir gesagt, wie meinesgleichen sich bewege, nämlich so und so, und ich bin vor den Spiegel getreten fast jeden Abend. Sie haben recht: Ich bewege mich so und so. Ich kann nicht anders."<sup>56</sup>

Andri is now interpreting his behaviour as evidence that he is really what the others take him for. Martin Esslin<sup>57</sup> writes of Andri:

"Having been seen as a Jew by the others, he has now *become* a Jew and cannot but be a Jew ... The image we have made for ourselves has killed the real human being, and now we kill the image *and* the man who bears it".<sup>58</sup>

The priest is the only character in Andorra who realizes that it was the prejudice of fixed images which drove Andri to his doom. He confesses: "Auch ich habe ihn gefesselt, auch ich habe ihn an den Pfahl gebracht".<sup>59</sup>

Frisch's analysis of the process of making fixed images of others can be applied to political situations as well as to personal

relationships. This is demonstrated in Andorra by the figure of the Senora. The Andorrans have a fixed image of the "Blacks" as a group hostile to Andorra and therefore they stone the Senora to death although she has done nothing which is actually hostile. Her behaviour is interpreted by the Andorrans in accordance with their image of the "Blacks" and thus proves her guilt in their eyes. Since she is from the country of the "Blacks" and the "Blacks" are hostile, she must be hostile too. Michael Kustow points out how Frisch's analysis of fixed images can be applied on both the personal and political levels. He writes:

"The graven images which threaten whatever is unfixed and exploratory in a man's life are both private and public ones. The wife who harbours a fixed image of the man society calls her husband, thinking she has circumscribed and exhausted all his potentialities for change, and the John Birchite who harbours an image of all Russians as sado-masochistic Stalinists: both of these people are nurturing graven images of the same order."<sup>60</sup>

### Depersonalization

Another form of image which a person can make of another is the process of depersonalization. This is not forcing a projected identity onto a person, but regarding him as merely an object without identity or personality.<sup>61</sup> This process is evident in Stiller in the relationship between Rolf and Sibylle. Rolf has a theory about freedom in marriage which he advocates at every opportunity (or which he "lectures" about, as Sibylle remarks). He believes that his theory is based on freedom and equality. Frisch writes: "Und



selbstverständlich fußte diese Theorie auf einer vollkommenen Gleichberechtigung von Mann und Frau".<sup>62</sup> Rolf is genuinely shocked when he realizes that his marriage is disintegrating. However, Rolf's theory is shown to be hypocrisy since the relationship between Rolf and Sibylle is really based not on freedom but on the smug self-satisfaction of being accustomed to one another. They take each other's presence for granted and no longer look for anything new from each other. Frisch writes: "In allen bisherigen Nöten hatten doch beide Teile offenbar das Gefühl, einander im Grunde durchaus sicher zu sein".<sup>63</sup> Rolf's theory makes Sibylle into an object in his world, about whose feelings and thoughts he need take no account. This is shown by his initial reaction to Sibylle's interest in the "Maskenball-Pierrot" (which turns out to be Stiller). Rolf is concerned with other matters (such as his coming appointment as "Staatsanwalt") and Sibylle is not really important to him. In fact, he does not even ask Stiller's name. The architect Sturzenegger captures the essence of this relationship when he relates the anecdote about an Eskimo who offers his wife to a guest because he sees her as his property in the same sense as anything else he owns.<sup>64</sup> Though Rolf claims he is allowing Sibylle complete freedom, he is actually carrying out the same process of depersonalization as the Eskimo. Sibylle accepts Rolf's theory until she realizes that she has been reduced to a mere object, interchangeable with any number of other similar objects. She tells Rolf:

"Für dich bleibt es eben irgendeine Frau, ein Verhältnis mit irgendeiner Frau. Das ist es ja, warum ich sage, du bist ein Junggeselle, ein verheirateter Junggeselle."<sup>65</sup>

Rolf doesn't admit that he has responsibilities to his wife beyond providing her with material comfort. For him, his wife is an object which can be kept quiet and contented with a child and a new house. Sibylle wants Rolf to recognize her individuality as a person and not regard her as just a woman. She explains: "Ich will, daß ich für meinen Mann nicht 'irgendeine' Frau bin".<sup>66</sup> She realizes that what Rolf calls freedom in marriage is really another name for indifference. She tells him: "Du bist frei, ich bin frei, und dabei ist alles so jämmerlich".<sup>67</sup>

The depersonalization of individuals is also a facet of the character of Walter Faber. In Homo Faber Frisch demonstrates the alienation from nature and other people which results when the technological "Weltbild" is taken to excess. Walter Faber regards life from a totally detached, materialistic standpoint. The world in which he lives and works is one of impersonal physical laws. The world of matter constitutes for him the only reality and he is unable to comprehend that there exists another "reality" of feelings, emotions and experiences. He says: "Ich habe mich schon oft gefragt, was die Leute eigentlich meinen, wenn sie von Erlebnis reden. Ich bin Techniker und gewohnt, die Dinge zu sehen, wie sie sind".<sup>68</sup> The physical world elicits an analytical but not an emotional response from Faber.

"Ich sehe den Mond über der Wüste von Tamaulipas - klarer als je, mag sein, aber eine errechenbare Masse, die um unseren Planeten kreist, eine Sache der Gravitation, interessant aber wieso ein Erlebnis?"<sup>69</sup>

Faber also applies this materialistic, mechanistic view to people and envisages them as merely complex machines giving out pre-conditioned responses to a continual stream of external stimuli.

He says:

"Unsere Handlungen als Antworten auf sogenannte Informationen, beziehungsweise Impulse, und zwar sind es automatische Antworten, größtenteils unserem Willen entzogen, Reflexe, die eine Maschine ebensogut erledigen kann wie ein Mensch, wenn nicht sogar besser".<sup>70</sup>

The results of this attitude in Faber's relations with the people around him is shown by his reserved, detached indifference to others. He regards solitude as his natural state and finds the prospect of the presence of any other person on more than a temporary basis frightening.

"Ich will allein sein! Schon der Anblick eines Doppelzimmers, wenn nicht in einem Hotel, das man bald wieder verlassen kann, sondern Doppelzimmer als Dauereinrichtung, das ist für mich so, daß ich an Fremdenlegion denke--".<sup>71</sup>

This attitude explains his aversion to marriage (he says: "Sie (Ivy) wußte, daß ich grundsätzlich nicht heirate"<sup>72</sup>). Faber is a misanthrope and in general derives no pleasure from the convivial company of his fellow-man (he says: "Ich hasse Feierlichkeit"<sup>73</sup>). He has a shyness about physical contact with others, as is pointed out early in the novel: "(Ich) griff ihn am Ärmel, was sonst nicht meine Art ist, im Gegenteil, ich hasse diese Manie, einander am

Ärmel zu greifen".<sup>74</sup> Ivy reproaches him for his self-centred indifference to her advances. "Ich sei ein Egoist, ein Rohling, ein Barbar in bezug auf Geschmack, ein Ummensch in bezug auf die Frau".<sup>75</sup> A contributing factor in the failure of Faber's relationship with Hanna in Zürich was her realization of his essential disregard for people as individuals (it was Hanna who first gave him the name "Homo Faber"). The reasons Faber advances for postponing their marriage are purely financial ones and Hanna is bitterly disappointed by his cold, practical reaction to the news that she is pregnant. Faber explains: "Ich fragte bloß: Bist du sicher? Immerhin eine sachliche und vernünftige Frage".<sup>76</sup> When Hanna refuses at the last moment to enter the church for the wedding ceremony Faber makes matters worse by appealing to her sense of practical reason. "Ich bat Hanna, die Sache ganz sachlich zu nehmen".<sup>77</sup> Hanna refuses to marry Faber, having realized his inability to see their relationship in any but the most impersonal and practical terms.

### The Inadequacy of Language

Frisch suggests in *Stiller* that the images which people make of one another may come about because of the poverty of language, which is inadequate to express the complex phenomenon of identity. Other people may make fixed images of an individual because he lacks the linguistic resources to explain to them who he actually is. *Stiller* asks: "Wie soll einer denn beweisen können,



wer er in Wirklichkeit ist?"<sup>78</sup> A person's identity is the result of the interaction of his mind and his experience, but experience cannot easily be transposed into language. Stiller says: "Ich habe keine Sprache für die Wirklichkeit".<sup>79</sup> Experience transcends language, it is "das Unaussprechliche" with which language grapples. "Schreiben ist nicht Kommunikation mit Lesern, auch nicht Kommunikation mit sich selbst, sondern Kommunikation mit dem Unaussprechlichen". Experience is elusive and not easy to pin down with words because words are never precise enough to convey what an individual wants to express and thus always act as a barrier to communication. Stiller claims: "Ich kann mich nicht mitteilen, scheint es. Jedes Wort ist falsch und wahr, das ist das Wesen des Worts".<sup>81</sup> A person can come close to expressing what he wants to say about himself by means of language, but always the reality of his experience is somehow different. "Was wichtig ist: das Unsagbare, das Weiße zwischen den Worten, und immer reden diese Worte von den Nebensachen, die wir eigentlich nicht meinen".<sup>82</sup> The situation is further complicated by the fact that the self changes continually with experience, so language can never correspond exactly to the speaker's present identity. If one tries to express one's identity, this very attempt at self-expression is a form of experience acting to change one's identity. This explains why Stiller claims he can never write down who he is. He says: "Zuweilen habe ich das Gefühl, man gehe aus dem Geschriebenen hervor wie eine Schlange

aus ihrer Haut".<sup>83</sup> Stiller tries to write down who he is, but finds that at best he has only written down who he was, since the act of writing and self-analysis have already changed him. Stiller says:

"Man kann alles erzählen, nur nicht sein wirkliches Leben: - diese Unmöglichkeit ist es, was uns verurteilt zu bleiben, wie unsere Gefährten uns sehen und spiegeln, sie, die vorgeben, mich zu kennen, sie, die sich als meine Freunde bezeichnen und nimmer gestatten, daß ich mich wandle, ..." <sup>84</sup>

This may perhaps explain why many of Frisch's characters (especially Stiller and Gantenbein) often use parables to express themselves.

In a parable not only the words used, but also the structure of the story and the pattern of the plot help to convey the meaning, hence the element of language is reduced in importance. It may be possible in this way to express something approaching more closely the nature of one's own identity.<sup>85</sup>

### The Need for Love

It can thus be seen that Frisch places great emphasis on the role of fixed images in destroying human relationships. Julika declares in Stiller that making images is a sin: "Jedes Bildnis ist eine Sünde".<sup>86</sup> It is sinful to limit the personality of the other by forcing him into a role which is alien to him. The human personality is so complex and elusive that any attempt at classification is necessarily a falsification of an individual's identity.

Martin Esslin writes:

"We create the others in the image we make ourselves of them. And this for Frisch is the ultimate sin, the extinction of their authentic existence, the origin of all the troubles of our time".<sup>87</sup>

In one sense Stiller is justified in maintaining that he is not Stiller, since he would have to acknowledge not only that he is himself, but also that he is the Stiller which Julika, his brother, his friends, the authorities and so on, take him for. It is impossible for one man to live up to all these different images at the same time. Stiller is driven to alcohol by the pressure of the images which others want to project onto him. He says:

"Denn ohne Whisky, ich hab's ja erfahren, bin ich nicht selbst, sondern neige dazu, allen möglichen guten Einflüssen zu erliegen und eine Rolle zu spielen, die ihnen so passen möchte, aber nichts mit mir zu tun hat."<sup>88</sup>

He finds that Julika still has a fixed image of the man she calls Stiller (he writes: "Sie sah mich nicht, sondern Stiller!"<sup>88</sup>).

Julika interprets all Stiller's words and actions in accordance with her "fixe Idee" of his identity. He is a prisoner of her image of him and nothing he says can convince her that the person she calls Stiller does not exist. He writes:

"Jedes Gespräch zwischen dieser Frau und mir, so schien mir, ist fertig, bevor wir's anfangen, und jede Handlung, die mir jemals einfallen mag, ist schon im voraus gedeutet, meinem augenblicklichen Wesen entfremdet, indem sie in jedem Fall nur als eine angemessene oder unangemessene, eine erwartete oder unerwartete Handlung des verschollenen Stiller erscheinen wird, nie als die meine. Nie als die meine! ..."<sup>90</sup>

A workable human relationship is one which is based on love. Frisch defines love as the refusal of an individual to restrict the identity of the person he loves with fixed images. He writes in his diary: "Die Liebe befreit es aus jeglichem Bildnis".<sup>91</sup> The

Jesuit novice who befriends Julika in the sanatorium points this out to her:

"Von diesem täglichen Besucher, scheint es, hörte Julika nebenbei auch den nicht unbekanntem Gedanken, daß es das Zeichen der Nicht-Liebe sei, also Sünde, sich von seinem Nächsten oder überhaupt von einem Menschen ein fertiges Bildnis zu machen, zu sagen: so und so bist du, und fertig!"<sup>92</sup>

Love is for Frisch an exploration of a continually developing and expanding personality and the witnessing of this development provides the true joy of love. He writes in the diary:

"Eben darin besteht ja die Liebe, das Wunderbare an der Liebe, daß sie uns in der Schweben des Lebendigen hält, in der Bereitschaft, einem Menschen zu folgen in allen seinen möglichen Entfaltungen".<sup>93</sup>

A person who loves must acknowledge that he can never exhaust the possibilities of an individual's personality, so he can never really say he "knows" his partner. "Unsere Meinung, daß wir das andere kennen, ist das Ende der Liebe".<sup>94</sup> Above all, a lover must never restrict the development of his partner by creating false images of his personality or even by allowing himself to expect certain patterns of behaviour from his partner. He must always allow "eine immer offene Tür für das Unerwartete" so that the partner's identity may develop freely. As Manfred Jurgensen writes:

"Von grundsätzlicher Bedeutung bleibt Frischs Überzeugung, daß das Geheimnis der Persönlichkeit allein durch ein anderes Mysterium erfaßt und bewahrt zu werden vermag: die Begegnung des Andern in Liebe".<sup>96</sup>



CHAPTER 4 - DIE FRAU VON HEUTE

The relationship between man and woman in Frisch's work can profitably be seen against the background of the changing relationship between the sexes in modern Western society as a whole. During the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries immense changes in the social role of women have occurred. Women have steadily progressed towards a position of complete equality with men in many areas of activity. Though there has been agitation for the equality of women for centuries,<sup>1</sup> it has only been in response to great economic changes that the social position of the majority of women has altered. The first great impetus given to the movement for the equality of women was provided by the Industrial Revolution. The rise of industry in Northern Europe, with its insatiable desire for labour, created many jobs for women and thereby caused the accepted social role of women to be questioned. Education for women also became more widespread with the rise of the middle class, who, growing affluent through commerce and industry, began to give their daughters an education.<sup>2</sup>

The next great advance in women's rights came with the first World War. Again, economic necessity forced social changes which had long been held in check. At this time women were called on to fill gaps in the labour force caused by the absence of millions of men in the armed services and by the necessity to

produce at full industrial capacity. After the war it was realized that the heavy casualties over the preceding four years would mean that women would continue to play an important economic role in the immediate future. It was in the years directly following World War I that the social changes already in progress received legal sanction with the passing of legislation in England, France and Germany granting women property rights, franchise and the right to hold public office.<sup>3</sup>

The debate over the social position of women has been reflected in German literary history. Bithell<sup>4</sup> traces the literary movement for the social, political and physical equality of women as far back as Friedrich Schlegel's Lucinde and shows that equal rights for women was one of the aims of 'das junge Deutschland' with its demand for 'the emancipation of the flesh'. He also points out that in the late nineteenth century a number of women writers were campaigning in their works for more equality for women and were concerned with depicting the situation of the modern woman.<sup>5</sup> Gerhard Schulz<sup>6</sup> demonstrates that the social position of women is an important theme in Naturalism. The Naturalist writers depicted the contradictions of an age in which the social role of women had already changed but it was still not publicly admitted. Schulz writes: "The inadequacies and shortcomings in the morals of an entire age are first visible in the discrepancies and clashes between the public and the private sphere, and particularly in the relations

between the sexes".<sup>7</sup>

It is in the work of Ibsen, however, and especially in the play A Doll's House (published in 1879) that the problem of the social role of women is treated most thoroughly. In this play Torvald treats his wife Nora like a household pet with which he can play at his pleasure. She tells him:

"I have been your doll wife, just as at home I was Daddy's doll child. And the children in turn have been my dolls. I thought it was fun when you came and played with me, just as they thought it was fun when I went and played with them. That's been our marriage, Torvald".<sup>8</sup>

She comes to believe that women sacrifice their honour by submitting to the role which has been assigned to them by men. Torvald adheres to the old view that a woman is primarily a wife and mother, but Nora claims: "That I don't believe any more. I believe that first and foremost I am an individual as much as you are - or at least I'm going to try to be".<sup>9</sup> At the end of the play Nora breaks out of the old social role into a new life of freedom and individuality.

#### The Figure of 'die Dame'

Frisch often uses the word 'Dame' rather than the more usual term 'Frau', to describe his female characters (Julika, for instance, is continually referred to as 'die Dame aus Paris'<sup>10</sup>). This term refers to the figure of the modern, emancipated woman which plays a prominent role in Frisch's work. The concept of 'Dame' (which Duden defines as a "gebildete, gepflegte Frau"<sup>11</sup>) contains an

element of sophistication and refinement. Yvonne in Die Schwierigen, for instance, is described as "eine elegante Dame"<sup>12</sup> and the first description of Julika in Stiller, given by Knobel, is as follows: "elegant sieht sie aus. Und duften tut sie durch den ganzen Korridor".<sup>13</sup> This refinement is also expressed in Gantenbein when the narrator imagines Lila as an Italian countess:

"Lila ist eine Contessa, katholisch, eine venezianische Contessa, Morphinistin, frühstückt im Bett, bedient von einem Diener in blauer Bluse, Tollkirschaugen. Ihr Vokabular ist abermals anders, ebenso der Freundeskreis, der Gantenbein für blind hält; die Szenerie ist ein Palazzo".<sup>14</sup>

In this section of the novel Lila is imagined as the product of centuries of manners and good breeding. "Sie ist wirklich eine Contessa, seit Jahrhunderten nicht gewöhnt, daß man sie anschreit".<sup>15</sup> This background provides her with poise and confidence in dealing with others and an infallible sense of good taste.

"Sie hat nun einmal keinen Sinn für Zeit, so viel Sinn für anderes, was wichtiger ist, weiß Gott; beispielsweise Sinn für Stil, Nicht bloß die venezianischen Möbel, nicht bloß ihr Vokabular, daß ohne ein einziges vulgäres Wort auskommt und dabei alles auszudrücken vermag, was sie nicht verschweigen will, sogar ihr Schweigen hat Stil".<sup>16</sup>

Frisch's concept of 'die Dame' also involves education. Many of his female characters are well-educated, such as Antoinette Stein who took a Ph.D. under Theodor Adorno and Lila, whom Gantenbein imagines gave up her studies to train as an actress.

An important feature of the modern woman is that she often desires a career of her own. Frisch's female characters are almost



invariably "berufstätige Frauen" who have a career to follow.

Julika, for instance, is a dancer, Lila is an actress, Hanna works in an archaeological institute and Antoinette translates German texts into French. The woman's relationship with her partner is affected by the fact that she has a career. She insists on having the same rights to work and independence as a man. As Camilla Huber expresses it:

"Eine berufstätige Frau habe dieselben Rechte wie der Mann, findet Camilla. Haushälterin eines Mannes zu sein, nur weil man ihn liebt, das findet sie das letzte. Schlichterding das letzte. Camilla verkauft sich nicht".<sup>17</sup>

The emancipated woman refuses to accept that the only jobs suited to women are the menial tasks allotted to them under the social division of labour characteristic of a by-gone age. She regards it as self-evident that some women will possess the qualities necessary for professional careers previously regarded as the domain of men alone. Gantenbein explains Lila's view on this:

"Sie ... ist keine Hausfrau; dazu ist sie zu geistvoll und läßt sich nicht von Männern einreden, daß die Frau gerade für jene Arbeiten, die den Männern selbst zu langweilig sind, eine angeborene Begabung haben müsse. Sie ist eine Frau, aber kein Untertan, also durchaus eine Frau von heute, eine großartige Frau, finde ich, eine der ersten Frauen dieses Jahrhunderts, die sich selbst ohne Getue eingesteht, daß es sie zur Ausübung eines Berufs eigentlich überhaupt nicht drängt."<sup>18</sup>

A career is important for the modern woman because it emphasizes her independence. Antoinette regards her career as an expression of her individuality and she wants to find a career which will give

her complete freedom to create something of her own. She says:

"Ich möchte einen kleinen Verlag gründen, meinen Verlag, wo ich machen kann, was ich will. Deswegen bin ich hier. Und wenn es mit dem Verlag nichts wird, etwas werde ich schon machen. Etwas Eigenes".<sup>19</sup>

The modern woman's career provides her with an income separate from that of her partner. The problem of finance can thus be a source of conflict in a permanent relationship with a man.<sup>20</sup> Frisch writes in Gantenbein: "Es gibt kaum ein Paar, das nicht spätestens bei der Trennung entdeckt, daß die Geldfrage zwischen Mann und Frau nie gelöst worden ist, und sich bitterlich daran verletzt".<sup>21</sup> The emancipated woman is not prepared to give up her profession and income to please a man who regards it as part of his social role to support his wife. She sees it as her right to contribute to the upkeep of the home and it is a sign of her equality that she does so. To be supported becomes a sign of inferiority. As Camilla Huber comments: "Sie meinen immer, daß sie sich alles erlauben können mit ihrem Geld, die Männer".<sup>22</sup>

The figure of 'die Dame' is thus one of extreme independence and self-reliance. Frisch's female characters are not ready to accept a life governed by restrictions which are now antiquated ("Ich lebe nicht im neunzehnten Jahrhundert",<sup>23</sup> says Antoinette). In Die Schwierigen Frisch relates a parable which illustrates the irrelevance in the modern world of an essentially medieval concept of woman which treats her as a goddess to be worshipped from afar

and wooed with gifts:

"Einmal, vor Jahrhunderten, kniete der Ritter und besang seine Frauen, seine Eifersucht, sein Geiz, sie schufen die hohen Begriffe einer weiblichen Ehre, die ihm diente, die auch die Frau schließlich annahm, annehmen mußte, da die Welt doch eine Männerwelt war! Einmal sagte die Frau: Was kniest du vor mir, was bringst du mir Blumen und Schmuck, nur um dich selber auszustatten, deinen Besitz, deinen Genuß; daß ich ein Mensch bin, was kümmert es dich?"<sup>24</sup>

The character of 'die Dame' wants to be recognized as an individual.<sup>25</sup>

Antoinette Stein expresses a resentment that men are unable to imagine women in roles beyond the accepted ones of housewife and sexual object. She lives with a dancer who does not intrude on her personal freedom, but she realizes that this kind of relationship is unusual. She says:

"Alle andern Männer sind langweilig, sogar gescheite Männer. Kaum sitzt man unter vier Augen, werden sie zutraulich oder nervös, und plötzlich fällt ihnen nichts anderes mehr ein, als daß ich eine junge Frau bin".<sup>26</sup>

She is distressed that she cannot establish a relationship with men on an intellectual level.

"Kaum einer fragt, was ich arbeite, und wenn ich von meiner Arbeit spreche, schauen sie auf meine Lippen. Es ist furchtbar. Kaum ist man mit ihnen allein in einer Wohnung um zwei Uhr nachts, meinen sie weiß Gott was ... und dabei haben sie Angst davor, vor allem die Intellektuellen".<sup>27</sup>

She finds that a relationship of the kind that she is seeking is only possible with homosexual men, since they do not regard her as a sexual object and can accept her as a person. "Alle meine Freunde, ich meine die wirklichen Freunde, die man für das ganze Leben hat, sind Homosexuelle".<sup>28</sup> Antoinette expects to be treated

as an intelligent and responsible human being with whom problems can be discussed calmly. She resents being treated as a child who must be forced to obey rules imposed on it by others. Thus she is not prepared to be shouted at when her behaviour does not conform to what Kürmann expects. She says: "Ich lasse mich nicht von einem Mann anbrüllen".<sup>29</sup> In Gantenbein Lila makes the same point that she is not prepared to be treated as an intellectual inferior or a naughty child. Gantenbein explains: "Wenn ich sie noch ein einziges Mal anschreie, sagt sie, werde sie ihre Koffer packen und voraussichtlich nie wiederkehren --".<sup>30</sup> It is Hanna in Homo Faber who voices this resentment of men in the most forceful terms. She expresses a bitter hostility towards men in general because of their refusal to recognize women as their equals. She says:

"Der Mann sieht sich als Herr der Welt, die Frau nur als seinen Spiegel. Der Herr ist nicht gezwungen, die Sprache der Unterdrückten zu lernen; die Frau ist gezwungen, doch nützt es ihr nichts, die Sprache ihres Herrn zu lernen; im Gegenteil, sie lernt nur eine Sprache, die ihr immer unrecht gibt".<sup>31</sup>

This hostility towards men is reflected in her relationship with her child. Hanna is very possessive about Sabeth and refuses to allow any of the men in her life to play an active role in bringing up the child. Referring to Joachim, Faber remarks: "Es war ja nicht sein Kind, auch nicht mein Kind, sondern ein vaterloses, einfach ihr Kind, ihr eigenes, ein Kind, daß keinen Mann etwas angeht".<sup>32</sup>



Hanna uses her relationship with Sabeth to strike back at the men she resents so much ("Mutterschaft als wirkliches Kampfmittel der Frau",<sup>33</sup> as Faber expresses it).

### Die unabhängige Frau

The female characters in Frisch's work want a relationship with men on a basis of independence. Antoinette, for instance, seeks a relationship with a man who is prepared to recognize her independence and who realizes that she may consent to live with him, but that she is still free and capable both emotionally and financially of living without him. The Registrar comments about Antoinette:

"Sie will ihr eigenes Leben, sie sucht keinen Mann, der meint, daß sie ohne ihn nicht leben kann, und der einen Revolver kauft, wenn er eines Tages sieht, daß sie ohne ihn leben kann".<sup>34</sup>

The figure of "die unabhängige Frau" regards it as her right to lead a life of her own outside the domestic life which she may share with a partner. Sibylle leaves Rolf and goes to America in search of the independence which she cannot find in her relationship with her husband. When she is able to support herself and her child in New York she feels her situation has changed. Frisch writes:

"Zum erstenmal stand Sibylle, Tochter aus reichem Haus, in dieser Welt wie andere Leute, nämlich einsam und für sich selbst verantwortlich, abhängig von ihren eigenen Fähigkeiten, abhängig von der Nachfrage, abhängig von Laune und Anstand eines Arbeitgebers. Es war merkwürdig: sie empfand es als Freiheit. Sie empfand es als Würde".<sup>35</sup>

The word "Würde" is important since it indicates that Sibylle's self-reliance and ability to support herself is a matter of dignity.

She requires that Rolf acknowledge her fundamental independence. To emphasize this she pretends to hesitate about going back to Rolf when he comes to New York to seek a reunion. Frisch writes:

"Auch Sibylle fühlte, daß die Welt, wie groß sie auch sein mochte, keinen Menschen hatte, der ihr näher stehen könnte als dieser Rolf, ihr Mann; sie leugnete es nicht. Immerhin erbat sie sich eine Bedenkzeit von vierundzwanzig Stunden".<sup>36</sup>

The female characters in Frisch's work thus see their relationship with a man as existing on a basis of independence as well as cooperation. This independence is also claimed in the sexual sphere. Frisch's women characters reserve the right to form liaisons outside their relationship with the partner and do not regard it as any of the partner's concern if such is the case.

Antoinette tells Kürmann:

"Ich finde es gar nicht gut, Hannes, ich finde es unmöglich, ein Mann wie du, ein Intellektueller, ein Mann in deinem Alter - ich meine: ein Mann von deiner Erfahrung - ob ich mit jemand geschlafen habe oder nicht, hast du nichts anderes zu denken in dieser Welt? Ist das dein Problem?"<sup>37</sup>

Similarly, when Gantenbein learns that Lila is having an affair with someone, he asks who the man is, but Lila will not tell him since she does not regard it as any of his business. Gantenbein explains:

"Ich verstehe aber, daß sie darauf nicht antworten kann; es geht Gantenbein nichts an".<sup>38</sup>

The modern women whom Frisch portrays do not regard fidelity as a matter of great importance in their relationships. Antoinette says to Kürmann:

"-- und gesetzt den Fall, ich hätte mit einem Mann geschlafen heute nacht oder jedesmal, wenn du es dir vorstellst: Was

dann? Ich bitte dich: Was dann? Ich frage dich: Wäre das denn der Wärmetod der Welt?"<sup>39</sup>

Frisch's modern women regard relations with other men as compatible with their relationship with the partner. Antoinette comments, when Kürmann learns she is having an affair: "Es ist meine Sache. Wenn sich zwischen uns etwas ändert hat, Hannes, dann sag ich's dir".<sup>40</sup>

Sexual freedom is emphasized by Frisch's characters because it is the final stage in the modern woman's demands for independence. The most pressing restriction placed on women by men in centuries of Western civilization has been sexual fidelity. In the eyes of many men adultery has been the most grievous crime a woman can be guilty of. By asserting their right to sexual freedom Frisch's women are therefore declaring their total independence from the will of men.

The figure of the emancipated woman in Frisch's work is characterized by self-confidence and decisiveness. Lila, for instance, ends her marriage to Gantenbein without the slightest hesitation, Sibylle is able to leave Rolf and support herself and her child in New York and Antoinette Stein achieves with one firm decision at the end of Biografie the new way of life which has eluded Kürmann during the whole play.<sup>41</sup> In Biografie Frisch points out this independence in terms of the chess motif by playing on the ambiguity of the word 'Dame'. When Kürmann is teaching Antoinette the rules of chess he says: "Das ist die Dame. Die darf alles".<sup>42</sup> This emphasizes the importance which Frisch's female characters place on their right to a life of their own. They are quite prepared

to sacrifice any relationship rather than be denied their freedom. They will consent to relationships with men only on their own terms. Antoinette says: "Wenn du willst, Hannes, dann geh ich. Und zwar sofort. Ich lebe nicht im neunzehnten Jahrhundert".<sup>43</sup>

The liberty of women, of which sexual freedom is the extreme case, is not regarded as something which men can grant. It is something to which women have a right. As Sibylle tells Rolf: "Du hast mir keine Freiheit zu geben. Was soll das denn heißen? Ich nehme mir die Freiheit schon selbst, wenn ich sie brauche --".<sup>44</sup> This purposefulness of Frisch's female characters contrasts strongly with the confusion and indecisiveness of the male characters who are often tormented by doubt and insecurity as they struggle to come to terms with the new phenomenon of the "unabhängige Frau".

In the figure of Yvonne in Die Schwierigen Frisch depicts the development of a woman towards the independence which is evident in his later female characters. Yvonne relies on her husband Hinkelmann to make all the decisions in the household and thus puts her future in his hands. Frisch writes: "Drei Jahre lang hatte sie ihm jeden Entscheid überlassen, da er doch, wie Yvonne immer sagte, der Mann war".<sup>45</sup> In the course of the novel she realizes that she has not been treated as an individual. She has not even been recognized as a person by her husband, who sees in her only a



substitute for his mother. Frisch writes of Yvonne's wedding:

"Yvonne ... widersprach nicht, als ihr von dieser Stunde an gleichsam die Rolle einer fehlenden Mutter zufiel".<sup>46</sup> Yvonne is a victim of the scheme of values which places women on an inferior intellectual level to men. She is unable to accept that she could be at least as intelligent as her husband. She says to Hinkelmann:

"Schon ganz am Anfang, als du zum erstenmal in unser Haus kamst und dich als Forscher vorstelltest, dachte ich mir, du muest klger sein als ich ... Ich wollte es nicht wahrhaben, da ich dir berlegen sei, ich schmte mich, verstehst du, als Frau!"<sup>47</sup>

When Yvonne realizes that she has not been treated as an individual she leaves her husband and sets up house on her own. Here she gives an impression of independence and self-confidence.

"Hier also hauste Yvonne, bewundert als Frau, die ihr eigenes Geld verdiente, ihre eigenen Wege ging, ihre eigene kleine Wohnung hatte, womit sie die Besucher verblffte, eine Wohnung mit Khlschrank und Lift, mit Dienstmdchen, mit Bchern und Blumen, ... mit Vogelzwitschern in der Dachrinne und Ausblick ber die Dcher und Trme der Stadt".<sup>48</sup>

However, this self-reliance is revealed as merely a facade. She is desperately trying to conceal the loneliness and confusion which are her true feelings. Frisch writes:

"Reinhart hatte es wie alle andern geglaubt, das Wunder ihrer tapferen Selbsterhaltung. Hatte niemand den Mut, sie zu fragen, ihre Antwort zu hren und sie als die zitternde Hochstaplerin zu sehen, die sie mehr und mehr war?"<sup>49</sup>

Frisch shows that the change from one social role to another is not a smooth development, but is a painful process. The section of Die Schwierigen in which Yvonne's life on her own is described is

entitled "Das Heimweh nach der Gewalt". Yvonne longs for the security of the position of inferiority characterizing her former relationship with her husband. Her self-respect will not allow her to return to this position, but she cannot help but be affected by the old system of values which specified that the male should be the dominant partner. In this context Jürg Reinhart says:

"Jede Frau, die von ihrem Geliebten nicht unterdrückt wird, leidet schließlich an der Angst, überlegen zu sein - an der Angst, daß er kein wirklicher Mann sei".<sup>50</sup> Yvonne thus appears as a character in between two social roles, the antiquated role of mother and house-keeper and the new role of a free and independent individual as is portrayed in Frisch's more recent female characters.

#### Die Krise der Männlichkeit

The immense changes in the role of women in modern society necessitate corresponding changes in the role of men. Men must adapt themselves to this new state of affairs and to their new relationship with women. Like Yvonne, Frisch's male characters can be interpreted as being caught between two social roles, the old role of dominance which formerly characterized men in Western society and the new relationship with women which must be formed for the future. Many aspects of the former role of men have now been questioned. A professional career, for instance, used to be regarded as an exclusively male privilege, but in the age of the "berufstätige Frau" this criterion of masculinity no longer applies.

The career of a woman can thus be a source of conflict. In Stiller Julika's career as a dancer gives rise to conflict between her and Stiller because she is much more successful in her work than Stiller is in his. There is therefore a certain amount of professional envy in Stiller's attitude to Julika and he feels inferior because other people admire his wife, but ignore him.

Frisch writes:

"Ihre Erfolge im Ballett, denen Stiller keine eigenen entgegensustellen vermochte, machten ihn etwas zu schaffen, trugen wohl auch dazu bei, daß Stiller ziemlich menschenscheu war, in jeder Gesellschaft drehte man sich um Julika, er wurde begrüßt als ihr Gatte."<sup>51</sup>

The 'Geldfrage' also arises as a consequence of Julika's career. It is traditionally part of the male role in Western society to support his wife, but again this has been called into question by the new relationship between the sexes. The 'Geldfrage' causes conflict between Stiller and Julika because Julika's income is guaranteed, whereas Stiller can only contribute to the expenses of the household when he gains a commission.

"Julika verdiente also beim Ballett ihre sechshundertzwanzig Franken im Monat, und wenn Stiller einmal Glück hatte und eine Figur verkaufen konnte, sei es für einen öffentlichen Brunnen oder so, ging es ganz ordentlich".<sup>52</sup>

Stiller's pride is hurt by the fact that he is unable to provide for his wife from his earnings. The extent of his shame over this point is illustrated by his outburst when he learns that Julika has told her friends that she paid for his new coat.

"Eines Morgens, mitten aus dem Frühstück heraus, fragte Stiller, warum sie im Ballett erzählt hätte, daß sein neuer Mantel, ein amerikanischer G-I-Mantel, von ihrem Geld gekauft wäre. Julika verstand seine Frage nicht. "Warum erzählst du das dem ganzen Ballett?" fragte er, zitternd vor Groll ..."<sup>53</sup>

Intellectual activity is also no longer accepted as the domain of men only. The educated professional woman has proved herself to be the intellectual equal of men and thus lays claim to intellectual and scholarly pursuits which were formerly reserved for men. Woman has in a sense become the intellectual rival of man. This may cause a crisis in some men whose image of themselves as a sex was defined by their intellectual activity. It is now necessary for the intellectual to find another way of defining for himself his masculinity (it is the character of the intellectual in particular who experiences the "Krise der Männlichkeit" in Frisch's work). It was noted earlier that Frisch remarked in a speech: "Jeder, der eine Rolle spielt, die nicht ganz mit der Wirklichkeit übereinstimmt, muß ja Angst haben, und darum erträgt er sehr wenig Kritik".<sup>54</sup> The male characters in Frisch's work feel that their masculinity is threatened by the encroachment of women on the traditional aspects of the male role. They therefore become very sensitive about their manhood (Stiller, for instance, is described as "diese männliche Mimose"<sup>55</sup>). The male must find some new role if he wishes to prove to himself that he is a man. The behaviour of Frisch's male characters could thus be interpreted as a search for a truly



masculine role to replace the one which is threatened by the figure of the modern woman.

One role which Frisch's characters choose to assert their masculinity is that of the man of action. War is an area of activity where their manhood is assured since in most countries only men go to war. The figure of the French legionnaire epitomizes the man of action for some of Frisch's characters. The "Fremdenlegion", where men face the dangers of a hostile environment and a ruthless enemy and where the criteria by which an individual is judged are courage and physical strength, is the goal of both Philipp Hotz and Isidor in Stiller's tale. It is in an all-male society such as this that the intellectual attempts to find proof of his masculinity. Stiller's efforts in the Spanish Civil War can also be interpreted as an attempt to prove his manliness. The figure of the romantic revolutionary bearing arms in the cause of justice and liberty is one which is commonly regarded as masculine. It is noted in the novel that Stiller goes to Spain for psychological rather than ideological reasons.

"Es ist etwas unklar, was ihn zu dieser kombattanten Geste getrieben hat. Vermutlich war es vielerlei zusammen, ein etwas romantischer Kommunismus, wie er zu jener Zeit bei bürgerlichen Intellektuellen nicht selten war, ein begreifliches Bedürfnis auch, in die Welt zu kommen, ein Bedürfnis nach geschichtlicher und überpersönlicher Verpflichtung, nach Tat".<sup>56</sup>

The memory of his failure in Spain hovers over Stiller throughout his relationship with Julika. He regards the incident with the

Russian gun as proof of his lack of masculinity. He puts forward as the reason for his failure to shoot: "Weil ich ein Versager bin. Ganz einfach! Ich bin kein Mann".<sup>57</sup> The fact that he has not lost his aspiration to be a man of action is indicated by his attachment to his military "G-I-Mantel" which he wears constantly.

Another aspect of this longing to be seen as a man of action is represented by the bullfighting souvenirs which Stiller keeps in his studio. The bullfighter is another figure of extreme masculinity which has often fascinated intellectuals in this century.<sup>58</sup> Stiller's role as a man of action is illustrated by the incident with Sibylle in his studio. He goes through a bizarre ritual in which he acts out a bullfight and struggles to make Sibylle accept him in this role. For Stiller the figure of the matador represents the victory of mind over body. The matador is a true man because he defeats his enemy by courage and skill. Merely to kill the bull is not enough. The matador's aim is to play with the bull and deliberately court danger. It is the conquest of his own emotions which provides the true victory and proves his manhood. Frisch writes:

"Grazie gegen rohe Kraft, Licht gegen Finsternis, Geist gegen Natur. Der Geist erscheint als silbern-weißer Matador, die blanke Klinge unter dem roten Tuch, nicht um zu töten, o nein, sondern um zu siegen, um die Figuren äußerster Todesgefahr zu bestehen, eine nach der andern, ohne je einen Schritt zurückzuweichen, Eleganz ist alles, Feigheit ist schlimmer als Tod, es geht um einen Sieg des Geistes über das tierische Leben, und dann erst, wenn er seine Gefahren bestanden hat, mit allen Regeln der Kunst bestanden hat, dann erst darf er seine Klinge gebrauchen".<sup>59</sup>

The career of "Techniker" in Homo Faber can also be interpreted as part of the search for a masculine role. The careers of building, engineering and so on which are fundamentally connected with hard physical labour, are traditionally regarded as a male preserve. In the case of Walter Faber the career of "Techniker" is explained as partly an attempt to bolster his own view of himself as a man. He claims: "Ich stehe auf den Standpunkt, daß der Beruf des Technikers, der mit den Tatsachen fertig wird, immerhin ein männlicher Beruf ist, wenn nicht der einzigmännlicher überhaupt".<sup>60</sup> Faber considers his intense devotion to his work a sign of his manhood. He says: "Ich lebte, wie jeder wirkliche Mann, in meiner Arbeit".<sup>61</sup> His rejection of emotions and close contact with others in favour of the impersonal world of technology is an attempt to show himself to be a man. "Ich ... schätze mich glücklich, allein zu wohnen, meines Erachtens der einzigmögliche Zustand für Männer".<sup>62</sup> Frisch describes how Faber mingles with dock-workers and labourers, who for him represent a form of manliness and toughness.

"Ich trank ein Bier und aß einen Hamburger, Mann unter Männern, ... ich schob meinen Hut in den Nacken, ichleckte den Schaum von den Lippen, Blick auf einen Boxkampf in Television, ringsum standen Dockarbeiter, vor allem Neger."<sup>63</sup>

Faber tries constantly to reassure himself of his masculinity, to be a "Mann unter Männern". A similar expression is used in Gantenbein. After Enderlin's encounter with Svoboda's wife in a bar the narrator remarks: "Vor allem war er froh, jetzt allein zu sein. Allein unter Männern".<sup>64</sup>

The intellectual can also attempt to prove his manhood to himself and others by means of sexual dominance. As the man is generally regarded as the active partner in the act of love, the intellectual may believe that he can prove his manliness by means of sexual relations. Yet merely the capacity to have such relations is not sufficient proof of manliness. The intellectual's fear that a woman could be feigning affection recurs in Frisch's work. Stiller remarks, for instance, that it is possible for a woman to pretend to be aroused by a man, when in fact he may have no emotional effect on her. He says:

"Möglicherweise sind es sogar nur wenige Frauen, die ohne Schauspielerei jenem hinreißenden Sinnenrausch erleben, die sie von der Begegnung mit dem Mann erwarten, glauben erwarten zu müssen auf Grund der Romane, die, von Männern geschrieben, immer davon munkeln".<sup>65</sup>

A similar view is expressed by Burri in Gantenbein:

"Die Frau, zur Schauspielerei genötigt durch die Eitelkeit des Mannes, spielt ihre Auflösung im Genuß, auch wenn er ausbleibt; der Mann weiß nie ganz sicher, was für die Frau wirklich geschehen ist; es ist der Mann, der sich preisgibt, nicht die Frau; das macht ihn mißtrauisch ..."<sup>66</sup>

In order really to prove his masculinity in a sexual sense, the intellectual must go beyond simply indulging in sexual relations. He must elicit from the woman some sign that he has aroused her emotionally and physically. Stiller therefore demands from his wife an intense response to his advances.

"Er nahm es offenbar als Niederlage seiner Männlichkeit, wenn die schöne Balletteuse, vielleicht nur etwas ehrlicher als andere Mädchen, nicht in Empfindung zerschmolz unter seinem Kuß".<sup>67</sup>



Julika's frigidity prevents her from satisfying Stiller's desire to dominate her in this sense. She is incapable of showing "diese Miene des Überwältigtseins, die er haben muß, um an die Liebe einer Frau und vor allem an seine Männlichkeit glauben zu können".<sup>68</sup>

The conflict between man and woman in the work of Frisch can thus be seen against the background of the changing social roles of the sexes in Western society. The struggle of the intellectual to assert his masculinity is a reaction to the phenomenon of the emancipated woman. The "Krise der Männlichkeit" can be interpreted as a sign of the uncertainty of the intellectual confronted with the task of adapting himself to his changed circumstances. Frisch depicts the confusion of a transitional stage in the development towards a new male role which will be compatible with the figure of the "unabhängige Frau".

CHAPTER 5 - GANTENBEIN : A TEST CASE

The search for a workable human relationship seems to be the basis of Frisch's novel Gantenbein. The structure of this novel (like that of Biografie and to a certain extent Zürich-Transit) is based on the pattern of variations on a theme. This structure could be compared with an experiment in which various processes are tried until a suitable one is found.<sup>1</sup> The narrator of the novel is consciously searching for a solution to the problem of conflict in interpersonal relations. Most of the novel is composed of the phantasy of the narrator. He continually alters the imaginary characters of Gantenbein, Lila, Svoboda and Enderlin. Lila, for instance, is imagined at various stages of the novel as an actress, a doctor and an Italian countess. The narrator also imagines alternative reactions to situations and depicts the consequences of each. When Svoboda learns of Lila's infidelity, the narrator presents a number of possible reactions:

"Ich sehe mehrere Möglichkeiten:  
 Svoboda saust mit seinem Wagen gegen einen Baum.  
 Oder:  
 Svoboda macht sich großmütig ...  
 Oder:  
 Svoboda ... wählt die Freiheit in Nachtclubs ...  
 Oder:  
 Svoboda nimmt die Sache nicht ernster als sie unter  
 berufstätigen Männern ist; er macht sich andere Sorgen ..."<sup>2</sup>

Gantenbein can thus be interpreted as a test case in the search for a workable human relationship. Frisch manipulates characters

and situations in an effort to find a combination which will create a relationship free from conflict.

### The Motif of Blindness

The narrator of Gantenbein has just experienced the disintegration of the relationship between himself and his partner. This is demonstrated by the recurring scene in which the narrator describes the empty flat which he and his partner used to share:

"Ich sitze in einer Wohnung:- meiner Wohnung ... Lang kann's nicht her sein, seit hier gelebt worden ist ... Ich sehe: jemand hat unsere Teppiche gerollt, mit Kampfer eingeseget und gerollt, Schnur drum, die Fensterläden geschlossen gegen Regen und Sonne und Wind ... Von den Personen, die hier dereinst gelebt haben, steht fest: eine männlich, eine weiblich ... Immerhin könnte es ja klingeln, ein Hausierer vielleicht der nicht wissen kann, daß hier nicht mehr gewohnt wird."<sup>3</sup>

The narrator attempts to imagine how the relationship could have turned out and creates the character of Gantenbein in his mind. He imagines that Gantenbein has been involved in a motor accident which has endangered his eyesight. Gantenbein pretends to be blind, although he has not really been injured. Frisch writes: "Eines Morgens wird der Verband gelöst, und er sieht, daß er sieht, aber schweigt; er sagt es nicht, daß er sieht, niemand und nie".<sup>4</sup>

Gantenbein adopts the role of a blind man as an experiment in relations with others.

"Sein Leben fortan, indem er den Blinden spielt auch unter vier Augen, sein Umgang mit Menschen, die nicht wissen, daß er sieht, seine gesellschaftlichen Möglichkeiten, seine beruflichen Möglichkeiten dadurch, daß er nie sagt, was er sieht ..."<sup>5</sup>

Gantenbein hopes to be able to attain a workable human relationship by means of his role as a blind man. This form of behaviour is intended to lead to a more harmonious relationship with others.

Frisch writes:

"Vor allem aber, so hofft Gantenbein, werden die Leute sich vor einem Blinden wenig tarnen, sodaß man sie besser kennenlernt, und es entsteht ein wirklicheres Verhältnis, indem man auch die Lüge gelten läßt, ein vertrauensvolleres Verhältnis --".<sup>6</sup>

The narrator imagines that Gantenbein loves Lila and assumes the role of "der Blinde" because he wants their life together to be happy. He says: "Ich stelle mir vor: mein Leben mit einer großen Schauspielerin, die ich liebe und daher glauben lasse, ich sei blind; unser Glück infolgedessen".<sup>7</sup> The narrator believes that the role of blind man represents the behaviour required to promote harmony in the world. "Was die Welt braucht, sind Leute wie Gantenbein, die nie sagen, was sie sehen und seine Vorgesetzten werden ihn schätzen."<sup>8</sup>

In his analysis of role in Gantenbein Frisch compares life with the theatre, as many writers have done in the history of Western literature.<sup>9</sup> Frisch envisages the world as a group of actors, each of whom plays the role of his choice. This explains the numerous references to acting in the novel. Lila, for instance, is a professional actress, and Gantenbein imagines himself as an actor when he takes on the role of "der Blinde". After Gantenbein has been issued with a certificate of blindness, Frisch writes:



"Allein im Lift, entspannt wie ein Schauspieler hinter der Kulisse, wo er sich ungesehen weiß, liest Gantenbein sofort die amtliche Karte. Er ist beglaubigt. Das gibt sofort ein ganz anderes Gefühl, ein anderes Auftreten".<sup>10</sup>

This parallel between life and the stage is brought out in the scene in which Gantenbein watches Lila and her fellow-actors rehearsing Macbeth. In this scene Frisch points out that in life, unlike in the theatre, it is impossible to distinguish between actors and audience. While the actors are playing the roles of the characters in the play, Gantenbein is playing the role of "der Blinde". While Gantenbein is the audience for the actors, the actors are also the audience for him. Gantenbein consciously analyses his role of "der Blinde" from the standpoint of the technique of acting. He comments, for instance, on the need for timing and restraint in acting. Other people are willing to accept a role if an individual can only make the appropriate gesture at the crucial moment. Gantenbein says: "Ein Schauspieler, der einen Hinkenden darzustellen hat, braucht nicht mit jedem Schritt zu hinken. Je sparsamer, umso glaubhafter. Es kommt aber auf den rechten Augenblick an".<sup>11</sup> By means of such theatrical expertise Gantenbein is able to convince the people around him that he is really blind.

When Gantenbein and Lila are entertaining guests, Frisch writes:

"Warum trinkt ihr denn nicht? fragt er und füllt die leeren Gläser, man schaut ihm zu, ich merke es genau, ob da ein Zweifel lauert oder nicht. Wo einer zweifelt, fülle ich sein Glas, bis es überläuft. Solche Kniffe sind immer seltener vonnöten".<sup>12</sup>

The signs of Gantenbein's role as a blind man are his stick, his yellow armband and above all his "blaue Brille". The glasses of the blind man make the world a completely transformed place for Gantenbein. The colours of the world become different (he remarks: "Nur Schwarz bleibt Schwarz"<sup>13</sup>). Everything now appears bluish or pinkish. Frisch mentions "die weißlila Sicherheitslinie",<sup>14</sup> "ihre lila Handschuhhand"<sup>15</sup> and "ein Rudel von bläulichen Lemuren".<sup>16</sup> Besides changing his relationship with the material world, Gantenbein's glasses also change his relationship with other people. The name "Lila" can be interpreted as referring to the narrator's partner, with whom a new relationship is possible because of Gantenbein's new role of "der Blinde". The blind Gantenbein is indeed successful in creating a relationship with Lila which is characterized by harmony. The marriage between Gantenbein and Lila is the happiest to be found in Frisch's work. Gantenbein remarks: "Ich bin glücklich wie noch nie mit einer Frau".<sup>17</sup> Lila is also content with the marriage ("Auch Lila ist glücklich wie noch nie"<sup>18</sup>). It seems to Gantenbein that he has actually realized the ideal relationship of 'das Paar' by means of his role. He believes that he has discovered the key to a workable human relationship (he says: "Ich glaube, ich habe die Lösung!"<sup>19</sup>). By examining the "Spielregel" according to which Gantenbein behaves the reasons for this success can be ascertained.

### The Sanctity of Role

Gantenbein's aim in adopting the role of a blind man is to avoid conflict with other people. This role promotes harmony because it permits other people to play any role they wish (Gantenbein comments: "Ich behandle jeden, der es nötig hat, als berühmten Mann"<sup>20</sup>). Since a blind man cannot compare with reality the self-images which people assume, Gantenbein cannot judge the authenticity of the roles which others play. He comments: "Wichtig vor allem: daß man sich, was immer man gerade sieht, innerlich aller Urteile enthält".<sup>21</sup> Frisch writes of Gantenbein's first encounter with Camilla Huber: "Die kleine Begegnung mit Camilla Huber neulich bestärkt ihn in seiner Hoffnung, die Menschen etwas freier zu machen, frei von der Angst, daß man ihre Lügen sehe".<sup>22</sup> The effectiveness of Gantenbein's role is due to the fact that it does not expose the roles of others as phantasy. Reinhard Baumgart<sup>23</sup> writes:

"Gantenbein ist natürlich der willkommene Partner in einer Welt des gesellschaftlichen Scheins, soll er doch alles, was man ihm vorsimuliert, wortwörtlich 'blindlings' glauben, auch etwa die Treue einer Frau namens Lila".<sup>24</sup>

Gantenbein is successful in his relationship with Camilla Huber because he does not endanger her self-image. His role of blind man makes friendship possible. Frisch writes: "Camilla und Gantenbein sind Freunde geworden, richtige Freunde".<sup>25</sup> Camilla rejoices that she has met someone who will treat her as a lady: "Der Gedanke,

als Dame zu erscheinen vor seinen Augen, beflügelte sie".<sup>26</sup>

Gantenbein is obliged to accept her in this role, since as a blind man he cannot know that she is really a "Milieu-Dame" (Frisch writes: "Er mußte sie als Dame behandeln"<sup>27</sup>). Camilla enjoys Gantenbein's company because she feels secure knowing that he cannot expose her for what she really is: "Sie genießt es, nicht gesehen zu werden. Sie genießt ihre Rolle".<sup>28</sup>

Gantenbein's relationship with Lila is also successful (he says: "Wir sind glücklich wie kaum ein Paar"<sup>29</sup>). Gantenbein's role is responsible for this harmony since he does not expose the inconsistencies in Lila's character. Gantenbein explains: "Was ich sehe und was ich nicht sehe, ist eine Frage des Takts. Vielleicht ist die Ehe überhaupt eine Frage des Takts".<sup>30</sup> Lila prides herself on her efficiency, so when she cannot remember where she has parked her car at the airport, Gantenbein does not remind her. "Wir suchen jetzt ihren Wagen, den ich sehe, doch Lila erinnert sich ganz genau, daß sie ihn weiter drüben abgestellt habe, und ich zanke nicht".<sup>31</sup> It is more important that conflict be avoided than that Gantenbein prove Lila is wrong. As he points out: "Es sind die kleinen Rechthabereien, die eine große Liebe zermürben".<sup>32</sup> Lila is also very proud of her home and sees herself as an efficient "Hausfrau" (Gantenbein says: "Lila kann Schmutz nicht sehen, der Anblick von Schmutz vernichtet sie"<sup>33</sup>). In fact, however, she is too impatient and absent-minded to take proper care of the home. Gantenbein



remarks:

"Unsere Wohnung gleicht einem Papierkorb kaum ist Lila von ihren Einkäufen nachhause gekommen, und so wird es bleiben, ich weiß es, bis Gantenbein insgeheim die Schnüre sammelt und die Papiere verschwinden läßt".<sup>34</sup>

Gantenbein is willing to clean the house for Lila, but he cannot do so overtly as Lila would take this as a reproach and an indication that she is not as efficient in the home as she thinks she is.

"Da Lila jedesmal, wenn in der Küche alles blitzblank ist wie in einem Küchenfachgeschäft, traurig wird wie über einen heimlichen Vorwürf, ist Gantenbein dazu übergegangen, nie wieder die ganze Küche zu putzen".<sup>35</sup>

He therefore washes the dishes in secret and a few at a time, so that Lila never notices. "Gantenbein wäscht keinen Teller und keinen Löffel mehr, wenn Lila zuhaus ist, sondern nur noch insgeheim, dann immer nur soviel, daß es nicht auffällt".<sup>36</sup> Gantenbein also confronts the "Geldfrage" by means of his role as a blind man. Lila has her own income from her career and to dispute this would be to endanger her role as a "selbständige Dame". As a blind man, however, Gantenbein is not in a position to work and can allow himself to live on Lila's income (he comments: "Ein wichtiger Punkt: ich lasse mich von Lila aushalten"<sup>37</sup>).

It is essential to the relationship between Gantenbein and Lila that Gantenbein maintain his role. The narrator says: "Hoffentlich gibt Gantenbein nie seine Rolle auf, die darin besteht, daß er glaubt".<sup>38</sup> The importance of this role in the relationship is indicated by the disastrous result when the narrator imagines

that Gantenbein gives it up.

"Ich würde es verstehen, wenn Gantenbein plötzlich seine Rolle aufgäbe, und ich frage mich insbesondere, wie Lila es aufnehmen würde, wenn Gantenbein eines Abends gestände, daß er sieht".<sup>39</sup>

Gantenbein realizes that such a confession would only damage the relationship by antagonizing Lila. He says: "Wenn Lila wüßte, daß ich sehe, sie würde zweifeln an meiner Liebe, und es wäre die Hölle, ein Mann und ein Weib, aber kein Paar".<sup>40</sup> The narrator imagines that in a fit of rage Gantenbein tells Lila that he is not blind and this admission is the beginning of the conflict which leads to their eventual separation. When Gantenbein has calmed down after breaking Lila's necklace in his anger, Frisch writes:

"Während für Lila, nachdem er sich beruhigt und wegen der Perlenkette entschuldigt hat, eigentlich nichts verändert ist ... beginnt für Gantenbein, indem er nicht mehr den Blinden spielt, tatsächlich ein anderes Leben ..."<sup>41</sup>

Lila cannot tolerate the situation in which Gantenbein sees her deception. "Gantenbein, seit er nicht mehr den Blinden spielt, ist unmöglich".<sup>42</sup> Gantenbein believes that the workable relationship he has established with Lila can only continue if he adheres to his role of blind man. He admits that it is not easy to maintain the role, but it is necessary. He says:

"Manchmal finde ich es nicht leicht. Aber die Vorteile, sage ich mir dann, die Vorteile, du darfst die Vorteile deiner Rolle nie vergessen, die Vorteile im großen wie im kleinen; man kann einen Blinden nicht hinters Licht führen ..."<sup>43</sup>

He concludes that the only solution is to retain the role of a blind

man (he says: "Ich bleibe Gantenbein"<sup>44</sup>).

### The Importance of Deception

The success of the relationship between Gantenbein and Lila is thus based on the deception by Gantenbein. Frisch writes: "Erst das Geheimnis, das ein Mann und ein Weib voreinander hüten, macht sie zum Paar".<sup>45</sup> In his Tagebuch Frisch discusses the origin of rules of courtesy in society and concludes that complete frankness is fatal in interpersonal relations. He tells the story of Marion, who naively wishes to tell the truth at all times and under all circumstances. He writes of Marion:

"Er will den Menschen sagen, was er denkt, so offen als möglich, gleichviel, wer am Tisch sitzt. Sein Irrtum besteht darin, zu meinen, daß er damit die anderen zwingt, ein gleiches zu tun."<sup>46</sup>

This openness and frankness does not however, cause Marion to be popular. On the contrary, the people around him regard it as an affront. He is ostracized and hangs himself in despair. Frisch explains Marion's fate by pointing out that he lacked the tact and politeness which enables society to function smoothly. He writes: "Der Wahrhaftige, der nicht höflich sein kann oder will, darf sich jedenfalls nicht wundern, wenn die menschliche Gesellschaft ihn ausschließt".<sup>47</sup> Always to be frank in one's relations with others is to invite disaster, since others may be deeply offended by the truth. "Er (der Wahrhaftige) übt eine Wahrhaftigkeit, die stets auf Kosten der andern geht".<sup>48</sup> Frisch suggests that some human

relationships may be based entirely on this deception and could not survive without it.

"Freundschaften gibt es, die jahrelang darauf bestanden haben, daß man sich von dem andern bewundert wähnte, eine Art von Versicherung, die man wiederum mit Bewunderung zahlte: ein offenes Wort, und weg ist sie".<sup>49</sup>

In Gantenbein Frisch puts forward the possibility that the relationship between Gantenbein and Lila may be a double deception.

Gantenbein writes: "Vielleicht weiß Lila schon lange, daß ich nicht blind bin, und läßt mir meine Rolle aus Liebe?"<sup>50</sup> The concept of love outlined in Gantenbein is characterized by the readiness to allow the beloved to play any role at all and to avoid pointing out inconsistencies in that role. Gantenbein concludes that only a "Blindenehe" of this kind can succeed. It is only by assuring the sanctity of the role of the other that a workable human relationship can be established. As Gantenbein says: "Es gibt keine andere Lösung. Einfach so: Spielraum".<sup>51</sup>

#### The Concept of the "Tuholi-Ehe"

Lila is typical of the figure of the "unabhängige Frau" in the work of Frisch in that she regards relations with other men as compatible with her relationship with Gantenbein (Gantenbein admits: "Lila betrügt mich ... von Anfang an"<sup>52</sup>). Gantenbein's role of a blind man reassures her since he is unable to witness her infidelity and thus cannot suspect her. Frisch writes of Lila:

"Sie sitzt auf seinem Knie, unbefangen in dem Grad, als er es ist, überströmend von Zuneigung, weil da kein Blick ist, der sie trotzig und lügnerisch macht; glücklich wie noch nie mit



einem Mann, frei von Heuchelei, da sie sich von keinem Verdacht belauert füllt".<sup>53</sup>

A character in Gantenbein tells the story of an African tribe called the "Tuholi" among whom human relationships are not characterized by sexual possessiveness. The members of this tribe form permanent couples for the purpose of raising children and providing for one another, but each individual is free to indulge in sexual relations with anyone he wishes. Frisch writes:

"In Afrika (so berichtet ein Gast) soll es ein Naturvolk geben, wo durch Los bestimmt wird, welcher Mann zu welcher Frau gehört und zwar so, daß er für diese Frau zu sorgen hat, wenn sie jung und gesund ist, wenn sie krank ist, wenn sie Kinder bekommt, wenn sie altert; im übrigen aber paaren sich alle mit allen. Und es soll (laut Gast) das friedsamste Volk sein in diesem dunklen Erdteil. Eros als Allmend, wie es der Natur entspricht, Geschlecht und Person unterstehen nicht dem gleichen Gesetz; daher kommt es bei den Tuholi (oder wie sie heißen) nicht vor, daß Männer aufeinander schießen wegen einer Frau".<sup>54</sup>

This tribe respects the right of private property but does not impose any other moral restraints on its members. "Außer Diebstahl aber gibt es zwischen diesen Menschen nichts, was ihnen als verächtlich und strafbar gilt oder auch Kummer macht --." <sup>55</sup> It is only by the creation of such a "Tuholi-Ehe" that a man can come to terms with the phenomenon of the "unabhängige Frau" who values her independence above all else. The story of Rolf's crisis in Genoa which is related in Stiller illustrates the difficulty of attaining the ideal of a "Tuholi-Ehe". Rolf insists that his wife is free, but when he discovers her infidelity he is profoundly shaken and

flees to Genoa in confusion.<sup>56</sup> He tells Stiller that the cause of his crisis was that he was capable intellectually of arriving at the concept of a relationship resembling a "Tuholi-Ehe", but found that he was incapable emotionally of accepting such an ideal in practice. He suggests that there exists a discrepancy between the intellectual and emotional evolution of man. He says:

"Unser Bewußtsein hat sich im Laufe einiger Jahrhunderte sehr verändert, unser Gefühlsleben sehr viel weniger. Daher eine Diskrepanz zwischen unserem intellektuellen und unserem emotionellen Niveau".<sup>57</sup>

Rolf indicates the effect of this situation by means of the parable about the parcel of "fleischfarbener Kleiderstoff".<sup>58</sup> He buys this parcel from a seaman and carries it around Genoa, but cannot get rid of it despite all his efforts. He asks: "War er denn dazu verdammt, diesen fleischfarbenen Stoff durch sein ganzes Erdenleben zu tragen?"<sup>59</sup> In order to resume his relationship with Sibylle he must rid himself of the parcel. He must renounce the element of sexual possessiveness which is no longer valid in the relationship with the "unabhängige Frau". It is the danger of a resurgence of this turbulent "Gefühlsleben" and in particular of jealousy which constitutes a threat to the establishment of a "Tuholi-Ehe".

### The Power of Jealousy

There are several examples in Gantenbein of the power of jealousy to destroy a relationship. Frisch uses the classical names of Philemon and Baucis to emphasize the harmony of the relationship

between Gantenbein and Lila (he writes: "Sie hießen Philemon und Baucis: das Paar"<sup>60</sup>). Yet even this ideal couple of Greek mythology cannot withstand the power of jealousy. It is also jealousy which destroys the relationship between Ali the Arab and his wife Alil (the similarity of the names indicates the harmony of the relationship in its early stages). This story which Gantenbein tells to Camilla Huber could be summarized as follows: "Ali und Alil waren das glücklichste Paar am Rande der Wüste ... er würde eifersüchtig ... und Ali und Alil waren das unglücklichste Paar am Rande der Wüste".<sup>61</sup> Gantenbein is aware that jealousy constitutes the biggest threat to his relationship with Lila (he says: "Hoffentlich werde ich nie eifersüchtig!"<sup>62</sup>). It is jealousy which eventually causes him to give up his role and begin the process which leads to his parting with Lila.

The horrific parable of the 'Bäckermeister' in Gantenbein demonstrates the violence of jealousy and the sudden change which can overcome an individual obsessed with jealousy. When he discovers his wife's infidelity, the gentle and good-natured baker breaks into a furious rage. Frisch writes:

"Ein Bäckermeister in O., ein vierzigjähriger Mann, im Dorf bekannt als gutmutig und verlässlich, hat aus Eifersucht folgendermaßen gehandelt: zuerst schoß er mit dem Ordonnanzgewehr, das jeder Eidgenosse im Schrank hat, auf den Liebhaber seiner Frau, einen einundzwanzigjährigen Tiroler, nicht ziellos, sondern genau in die Lenden, dann nahm er das rostfreie Soldatenmesser, das ebenfalls zur Ausrüstung im Schrank gehört und zerschnitt seiner Frau, Mutter von zwei Kindern, zurzeit schwanger, das Gesicht".<sup>63</sup>

The violence of the 'Bäckermeister' is not directed simply at the actions of his wife. He attacks her face because it is her very identity he wants to mutilate. Frisch writes: "Der Körper ist unschuldig, der Körper ist das Geschlecht, das Gesicht ist die Person ..."<sup>64</sup>

The extremes of suspicion which jealousy is capable of inciting is indicated by Frisch's anecdote entitled Tonband in Gantenbein. Gantenbein leaves a taperecorder playing while guests are present so that he can play the tape back later and hear what was said while he was out of the room. He wants to see if the attitudes of the others change when he is not there. He says:

"Reden sie jetzt, da ich gegangen bin, noch immer über die Geschichte der Päpste? oder worüber? Vor allem aber: wie reden sie jetzt? Anders als zuvor? Genau so? Ernsthafter oder spaßiger?"<sup>65</sup>

Jealousy can take hold of a person even though he may have no evidence on which to base his suspicions. Philemon in Gantenbein, for instance, has no evidence that Baucis is unfaithful. When Baucis is pleased to receive a letter, Frisch writes:

"Außer ~~dem~~ diesem Entzücken, das übrigens von anderen Damen der Gesellschaft geteilt worden ist, ... ist eigentlich nichts vorgefallen, nichts Tatbeständiges, was Philemon, einmal beim Verstand genommen, irgendwie zur Annahme berechtigt, daß Baucis eine Tuholi-Ehe führt, überhaupt nichts --".<sup>66</sup>

Philemon's suspicion alone justifies him in investigating his wife's affairs. "Er haßt sie, und das gibt ihm mehr und mehr das Recht, ihre Schublade zu erbrechen, was aber schon geschehen ist."<sup>67</sup> Even



when he is unable to find any evidence to justify his suspicions, Philemon is not satisfied. This lack of evidence itself becomes evidence of his wife's infidelity. When letters for her no longer arrive after he has intercepted what he believes are three letters from a lover, Philemon takes this as further proof of deception.

Frisch writes:

"Sein Verdacht, geschöpft aus eigener Erfahrung, ist simpel genug: sie haben gemerkt, daß drei Briefe unterschlagen worden sind, und nun schreiben sie einander unter einer Deckadresse".<sup>68</sup>

Frisch demonstrates how jealousy can destroy a man's powers of judgement and common sense, so that he is no longer able to reason clearly. Gantenbein breaks into Lila's drawer and steals her letters. He is triumphant to find that they are love letters, only to discover that they were written to Lila by Gantenbein himself at the time of her first marriage to Svoboda. Lila had kept them for sentimental reasons. The effect of jealousy on his judgement was so great that Gantenbein did not even recognize his own handwriting. Frisch writes:

"Wieso Svoboda? Das würde heißen, daß das seine eigenen Briefe sind ... Es ist seltsam, wie fremd uns bisweilen die eigene Handschrift sein kann, vor allem wenn man nicht darauf gefaßt ist, wenn man eine Schublade aufbricht, um einer schlafenden Frau auf die Schliche zu kommen, und dabei nur sich selbst auf die Schliche kommt".<sup>69</sup>

Frisch also points out that culture and good breeding are no defence against the power of jealousy. This is illustrated by the story of the murder of Camilla Huber. Camilla is murdered by her fiancé when

he learns that she is a "Milieu-Dame" and Gantenbein gives evidence at the subsequent trial. The man accused of the murder holds a high public office and is sophisticated and well-educated yet Gantenbein recognizes that social standards of decency count for nothing when a person is obsessed with the torments of jealousy. Gantenbein comments:

"Ich sehe den Angeklagten:

Ein Herr, den ich manchmal gesehen habe, ehemals eine Persönlichkeit, ein Mann von Bildung, was nicht heißen soll, daß ich es ihm nicht zutraue; ich kenne die Eifersucht, der keine Bildung gewachsen ist. Im Gegenteil, die Bildung staut sie nur, bis sie ganz primitiv wird".<sup>70</sup>

Frisch suggests that a jealous man actually desires proof of his wife's infidelity, he wants his suspicions to be true. One of the greatest torments of jealousy is doubt. A person cannot endure uncertainty as to whether he is correct in his suspicions. It is impossible for him to prove his wife's innocence, but it is possible for him to prove her guilt. He thus prefers to have his suspicions confirmed rather than continue to be tortured by uncertainty. The baker in Gantenbein is pleased when he discovers his wife with her lover. Frisch writes:

"Endlich! sagt er, endlich wisse er Bescheid. Also doch! sagt er, in diesem Augenblick der Gefäßteste von allen, ... vernünftig, befriedigt, da seine lange Eifersucht also nicht ohne Grund gewesen ist".<sup>71</sup>

A similar incident occurs in Die Schwierigen. Jürg Reinhart believes Yvonne is having an affair with another man and waits outside her window to confirm his suspicions. When he hears her

talking to a man he is relieved that at last he knows the truth.

"Gott sei Dank! denkt Reinhart, wie er die Treppe wieder hinabgeht, langsam, nicht einmal leise, fallend von Schritt zu Schritt, die Hand am Geländer ... Gott sei Dank!"

### Die Angst vor dem Vergleich

In his Tagebuch Frisch interprets jealousy in terms of its effect on the ego. He concludes that the power of jealousy is due to its connection with feelings of inferiority. He regards jealousy as being the emotion aroused in a person when he discovers that his love or his companionship has been compared by his partner to that of another and found wanting. He writes:

"Wenn der Unselige, der mich gestern besucht hat, ein Mann, dessen Geliebte es mit einem andern versucht, wenn er ganz sicher sein könnte, daß die Gespräche eines andern, die Küsse eines andern, die zärtlichen Einfälle eines andern, die Umarmung eines andern niemals an die seinen heranreichen, wäre er nicht etwas gelassener?"

Eifersucht als Angst vor dem Vergleich".<sup>73</sup>

This comparison arouses feelings of inferiority in an individual which make him want to demonstrate what he feels to be his true worth by removing his rival and possessing his partner exclusively. Frisch comments: "Das allgemeinste Gefühl von Minderwert, das wir alle kennen, ist die Eifersucht".<sup>74</sup> Because it is the act of comparison rather than the act of infidelity which causes jealousy, a person can be jealous of a rival who no longer exists. Frisch writes:

"Wie ist es möglich, daß sich die Eifersucht, wie es denn öfter vorkommt, sogar auf Tote beziehen kann, die mindestens

als leibliche Gestalt nicht wiederkommen können? Nur aus Angst vor dem Vergleich".<sup>75</sup>

Insecurity is thus the basis of jealousy. People who are uncertain of their role in society are particularly susceptible to jealousy because they fear a comparison which will prove the inadequacy of their role. Frisch explains:

"Männer, die ihrer Kraft und Herrlichkeit sehr sicher sind, wirklich sicher, und Weiber, die ihrer Zaubers sicher sind, so sicher, daß sie beispielsweise nicht jedem Erfolg ihres Zaubers nachgeben müssen, sieht man selten im Zustand der Eifersucht".<sup>76</sup>

Frisch interprets Shakespeare's Othello in these terms. He regards the character of Othello as representing the insecurity at the heart of the situation of a persecuted minority group. He writes:

"Othello ist in erster Linie nicht ein Eifersüchtiger, sondern ein Mohr, also ein Mensch aus verachteter Rasse".<sup>77</sup> The fact that Othello has achieved a position of some influence in Venetian society does not alleviate his fear that he is different from the people around him.

"Sein persönlicher Erfolg, den er soeben errungen hat, ändert nichts an seinem verwunderten Selbstvertrauen. Man achtet ihn zwar: obschon er ein Mohr ist. Es bleibt das Obschon, das er spürt, es bleibt seine andere Haut. Er leidet an seinem Anderssein".<sup>78</sup>

Othello struggles to be successful in order to be admitted to Venetian society, but he knows that despite his success he can always be discriminated against on the basis of his colour. "Hinter allem, wie ein Schatten, steht jenes Gefühl von Minderwert, und der Mohr



ist ehrgeizig, wie wir alle sein müssen in dem Grad, als wir Mohren sind".<sup>79</sup> It is this basic insecurity which makes Othello susceptible to jealousy because he fears the comparison with the members of the society around him. He fears constantly that his position as a member of Venetian society will be threatened if he is exposed as the outsider which he feels himself to be. "Die Eifersucht wird beispielhaft für die allgemeinere Angst vor dem Minderwert die Angst vor dem Vergleich, die Angst, daß man das schwarze Scharf sei --."<sup>80</sup> This link between jealousy and insecurity is relevant to the problem of the relationship between the intellectual and the "unabhängige Frau", since the intellectual is characterized by an uncertainty about his role in modern society. The intellectual's lack of confidence caused by the questioning of the traditional male role by the emancipated woman makes him particularly subject to the feelings of inferiority which allow jealousy to take hold (Walter Faber, for instance, remarks: "Ich hasse Minderwertigkeitsgefühle"<sup>81</sup>).

#### The Fatal Paradox

Frisch suggests in Gantenbein that jealousy is essential to a relationship between man and woman if that relationship is to survive. He presents jealousy as the final and inevitable stage of love. The feelings of hate aroused by jealousy correspond very closely to those of love which characterize the early stages of the relationship. Love and hate, although opposites in one sense, are very closely related in another. The physiological manifestations

of the two emotions resemble one another and both are passionate emotions directed at one particular object. Frisch writes of Philemon: "Er haßt sie. Er schlottert, Philemon im Pyjama und barfuß, aber froh, daß er haßt. Das ist noch einmal wie das erste Gefühl so heiß, so eindeutig".<sup>82</sup> Similarly, in connection with the name of a partner's lover, Frisch writes: "O dieser Name! Er allein gibt noch einmal das wilde Gefühl für das andere, das süße, das heiße, das maßlose Gefühl, wenigstens die Kehrseite davon".<sup>83</sup> Thus Frisch seems to regard love and jealousy as inseparable. Without the stimulation of jealousy human relationships are in danger of lapsing into indifference. He writes in Gantenbein:

"Wie sollt Ihr es ertragen, daß Ihr euch so gut, immer besser, so geschlechtslos versteht, als wart Ihr nicht immer noch, so als Körper gesehen, ein Mann und ein Weib? Da sucht Ihr plötzlich Grund zur Eifersucht. Ohne sie, o Gott, wäre eure tödliche Kameraderie vollkommen".<sup>84</sup>

Yet the power of jealousy is so great that it poses a continual threat to the existence of the relationship. It is jealousy which destroys the harmonious relationships depicted in Gantenbein. This fatal paradox of love is that it needs the element of jealousy in order to persist, but jealousy is a force which works to destroy a relationship. This situation appears to be an inherent weakness in the couple as Frisch portrays it and constitutes a barrier to the attainment of a workable human relationship.

### CONCLUSION

Frisch is haunted by the problem of human conflict, which occurs in almost all his works. He has admitted that he is dominated by a number of themes from which he finds himself unable to escape. He remarked in his interview with Horst Bienek:

"Bei jeder neuen Arbeit hatte ich das naive Gefühl, daß ich jetzt, Gott sei Dank, ein radikal anderes Thema angehe - um früher oder später festzustellen, das alles, was nicht radikal mißlingt das radikal gleiche Thema hat."<sup>1</sup>

He puts forward in his work the concept of the ideal relationship of 'das Paar', but is unable to offer any absolute rules for the attainment of such a relationship. It is indeed not regarded as the task of the creative writer to provide definitive solutions, since the same criteria are not used to assess the work of a creative writer as are used to judge that of a social scientist. Frisch is writing fiction and is therefore not required to draw conclusions which are valid beyond the context of the world of his characters. In terms of the chess motif, Frisch tries to discover some of the rules governing the game of interpersonal relations. It is in the exploration of such "Spielregel" and in the explication of some of the difficulties of the problem of conflict that his contribution to the search for a workable human relationship lies. In his Tagebuch Frisch points out that it is his aim in his work to pose questions in such a way that his readers or audience will be stimulated to

find their own personal solution to the problem. He writes:

"Als Stückeschreiber hielte ich meine Aufgabe für durchaus erfüllt, wenn es einem Stück jemals gelänge, eine Frage dermaßen zu stellen, daß die Zuschauer von dieser Stunde an ohne eine Antwort nicht mehr leben können - ohne ihre Antwort, ihre eigene, die sie nur mit dem Leben selber geben können".<sup>2</sup>

Although relations between people are of central concern to Frisch, he is not really a moralist. He regards his work as essentially a personal quest for knowledge of himself and the world. He wrote in his correspondence with Walter Höllerer: "(Ich) bin ein Egomane, ich schreibe nicht, um zu lehren, sondern um meine Verfassung auszukundschaften durch Darstellung".<sup>3</sup>

This conclusion must necessarily be inconclusive since Frisch himself is hesitant about drawing conclusions from his own work. The reluctance to commit himself to absolute statements is typical of Frisch's attitude to life. He shuns dogma and definitive conclusions (he commented to Horst Bienek: "Auf Dogmen ist kein Verlaß bei mir").<sup>4</sup> This attitude is reflected in the fragmented structure of his works (as demonstrated by his extensive use of the diary form). He remarks in his Tagebuch on the prominence of the "Skizze" as a modern literary form and the significance of the choice of such a form. He writes:

"Die Skizze hat eine Richtung aber kein Ende; die Skizze als Ausdruck eines Weltbildes, das sich nicht mehr schließt oder noch nicht schließt; als Scheu vor einer förmlichen Ganzheit, die der geistigen vorausseilt und nur Entlehnung sein kann; als Mißtrauen gegen eine Fertigkeit, die verhindert, daß unsere Zeit jemals eine eigene Vollendung erreicht --".<sup>5</sup>



Frisch's analysis of interpersonal relations also has a direction but no end. He proceeds by means of his characters towards the concept of a workable human relationship, but can offer no final solution. Frisch is extremely conscious of the diversity and complexity of human beings and realizes that any solution to personal problems must proceed on the level of the individual. In a letter to Walter Höllerer he commented that in his view the difference between science and literature is that science deals with abstract generalizations, whereas literature deals with the particular problems of individuals. He writes:

"Die Domäne der Literatur? Was die Soziologie nicht erfaßt, was die Biologie nicht erfaßt; das Einzelwesen, das Ich, nicht mein Ich, aber ein Ich, die Person, die die Welt erfährt als Ich, die stirbt als Ich, die Person in allen ihren biologischen und gesellschaftlichen Bedingtheiten; also die Darstellung der Person, die in der Statistik enthalten ist, aber in der Statistik nicht zur Sprache kommt und im Hinblick aufs Ganze irrelevant ist, aber leben muß mit dem Bewußtsein, daß sie irrelevant ist - das ist es, was wenigstens mich interessiert, was mir darstellenswert erscheint: alles was Menschen erfahren, Geschlecht, Technik, Politik als Realität und als Utopie, aber im Gegensatz zur Wissenschaft bezogen auf das Ich, das erfährt".<sup>6</sup>

The element of play is important in Frisch's work. He consciously "plays" or experiments with characters and situations to gain an insight into the processes of interaction between people. This aspect of his work is particularly evident in his more recent works which are based on the structure of variations on a theme (such as Biografie, which Walter Höllerer describes as an example of "Variantentheater"). Frisch explores the problem of conflict in a search for a means to attain the ideal of a workable human

relationship. He attacks human conflict from continually changing perspectives and the diversity of his approaches is indicated in the preceding chapters. Frisch regards his work as a continual experiment. He wrote to Walter Höllerer, concerning the latter's views on Biografie:

"Ich probiere. Daher bin ich mehr als verlegen vor Ihrer Frage, wie wir uns dieses Variantentheater denn vorzustellen haben. Vielleicht erweist sich diese Bezeichnung, die sich zwar anbietet, schon als unhaltbar. Ich weiß es nicht, ich probiere".<sup>7</sup>

FOOTNOTES

Introduction

1. FRISCH, Max: Tagebuch 1946-1949, Frankfurt am Main, 1950, p. 278.
2. Ibid, p. 329.
3. Ibid, p. 253.
4. Ibid, pp. 326-327.
5. Manfred Jurgensen (in: Max Frisch. Die Dramen, Bern, 1968) shows how Frisch's dramatic technique is based on a synthesis of both dramatic and epic elements.
6. Trial scenes are a feature of a number of Brecht's plays e.g. Der gute Mensch von Sezuan and Der kaukasische Kreidekreis.
7. e.g. by Martin Esslin in his authoritative book The Theatre of the Absurd, London, 1961.
8. The productions of Greek tragedies by Tyrone Guthrie and Max Reinhardt have aroused great interest and Greek plays have been adapted by many modern playwrights including Hofmannsthal, Cocteau, Brecht and Anouilh.
9. FRISCH, Max: Stücke Band 1, Frankfurt am Main, 1962, p. 374.
10. Tagebuch, p. 275.
11. The figure of the detective as representing the supreme intellectual endeavour is depicted in exaggerated form in Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes.

12. e.g. WEISSTEIN, Ulrich: Max Frisch, New York, 1967.
13. Frisch's latest work is a retelling of the legend of William Tell in prose form (Wilhelm Tell für die Schule, Frankfurt am Main, 1971).

## Chapter 1

1. JURGENSEN, Manfred: Max Frisch. Die Dramen, Bern, 1968.
2. Ibid., p. 60.
3. Ibid., p. 66.
4. Ibid., p. 85.
5. MAYER, Hans: "Anmerkungen zu 'Stiller'", in Thomas Beckermann (ed.): Über Max Frisch, Frankfurt am Main, 1971, pp. 24-42.
6. Ibid., p. 29.
7. Ibid., p. 29.
8. Ibid., p. 32.
9. FRISCH, Max: Homo Faber, Frankfurt am Main, 1957, p. 218.
10. FRISCH, Max: Stiller, Frankfurt am Main, 1954, p. 141.
11. ROISCH, Ursula: "Max Frischs Auffassung vom Einfluß der Technik auf den Menschen - nachgewiesen am Roman 'Homo Faber'", in Thomas Beckermann (ed.): Über Max Frisch, Frankfurt am Main, 1971, pp. 84-109.
12. Ibid., p. 98.
13. Frisch has spent much of his adult life travelling to all



parts of the globe and has been domiciled in the U.S.A. (1952, 1970), Rome (1960-1965) and Japan (1969). Details of his journeys are provided in Beckermann, pp. 303-304.

14. FRISCH, Max: "Festrede", in Öffentlichkeit als Partner, Frankfurt am Main, 1967, pp. 7-14.

15. Ibid., pp. 8-9.

16. Stiller, p. 149.

17. Öffentlichkeit als Partner, p. 12.

18. Stiller, p. 149.

19. Ibid., p. 150.

20. Öffentlichkeit als Partner, p. 11.

21. Ibid., p. 8.

22. Stiller, p. 188.

23. Swiss society is the object of the bitter satire of Peter Bichsel's Des Schweizers Schweiz, Zürich, 1969.

24. MANGER, Phillip: "Kierkegaard in Max Frisch's novel 'Stiller'", in German Life and Letters 20 (1966/67) pp. 119-131.

25. Ibid., p. 127.

26. Ibid., p. 125.

27. Stiller, p. 53.

28. MANGER, p. 121.

29. Kierkegaard, Repetition, quoted in Manger, p. 124.

30. Ibid., p. 122.

31. This is characteristic of the French writers of the

"nouveau roman" school, who attempt to describe only external events and do not depict what their characters think. The influence of this point of view on Frisch can perhaps be detected in his frequent use of expressions such as "vermutlich", "denke ich", "wahrscheinlich" and "wohl".

32. e.g. Peter Weiss (Abschied von den Eltern and Fluchtpunkt), Alfred Andersch (Efracim) and Heinrich Böll (Ansichten eines Clowns).

33. This technique has been used by Alfred Andersch (Sansibar oder der letzte Grund and Die Rote), Uwe Johnson (Mutmassungen über Jakob) and Peter Chotjewitz (Die Insel).

34. This is the traditional definition of the "Bildungsroman" as expounded in PASCAL, Roy: The German Novel, Manchester University Press, 1965.

35. This may explain the image of the labyrinth which has preoccupied many modern novelists such as Kafka, Alain Robbe-Grillet and the Argentinian Jorge Luis Borges.

36. KUSTOW, Michael: "No Graven Images: some notes on Max Frisch" in The Encore Reader, London, 1965, p. 183.

37. WHITE, Andrew: "Max Frisch's 'Stiller' as a novel of alienation and the 'nouveau roman'", in : Arcadia 2 (1967) pp. 288-304.

38. Stiller, p. 97.

39. FRISCH, Max: Mein Name sei Gantenbein, Frankfurt am Main, 1964, p. 196.

1967 40. Other approaches to Frisch are Manfred Jurgensen's analysis of the poetic imagery in Frisch's work and the intensive stylistic analysis in Walter Schenker's Die Sprache Max Frischs, Berlin, 1969.

41. By "interpersonal relations" is meant the relationship between an individual and the people around him, particularly friendship, the relations between the sexes and the parent-child relationship. For the purposes of analysis such relationships will often be referred to in terms of the relationship between an individual and a hypothetical "other".

42. Stiller, pp. 119-130.

43. Homo Faber, p. 207.

44. Ibid., p. 72.

45. Ibid., p. 72.

46. Ibid., pp. 81-82.

47. Ibid., p. 202.

48. Stiller, p. 184.

49. Ibid., p. 184.

50. Ibid., p. 184.

51. FRISCH, Max: Die Schwierigen oder j'adore ce qui me brûle, Zürich, 1957, p. 158.

52. Ibid., p. 209.

53. Homo Faber, p. 57.

54. FRISCH, Max: Biografie: Ein Spiel, Frankfurt am Main,

1967, p. 40. *ibid.*, pp. 130-131.

55. *Ibid.*, p. 40.

56. Homo Faber, pp. 251-252.

57. Biografie, p. 93.

58. *Ibid.*, p. 94.

59. By the term "couple" is meant the permanent relationship between man and woman. This term would seem to be more appropriate than that of "marriage", since many of the central characters in Frisch's work are not in fact married.

60. KAISER, Joachim: "Max Frisch und der Roman. Konsequenzen eines Bildersturms" in Thomas Beckermann (ed.), Über Max Frisch, Frankfurt am Main, 1971, p. 48.

61. *Ibid.*, p. 49.

62. *Ibid.*, p. 49.

63. Beckermann, p. 24.

64. Frisch describes at length the reactions of Rolf and Julika (in Stiller) and of Svoboda (in Gantenbein) to such a discovery.

65. e.g. Flaubert (Madame Bovary), Tolstoy (Anna Karenina) and Theodor Fontane who treated this theme in a number of his novels.

66. HARDY, Frank: Power without Glory, Melbourne, 1950.

67. Gantenbein, p. 228.

68. Jahresring, 1961/62, pp. 206-209.

69. Gantenbein, p. 132.



70. Ibid., pp. 130-131.
71. Ibid., p. 130.
72. Ibid., p. 132.
73. Ibid., p. 133.
74. Ibid., p. 130.
75. Ibid., p. 130.
76. Ibid., p. 131.
77. Ibid., p. 131.
78. Ibid., p. 130.
79. Biografie, pp. 30-31.
80. Gantenbein, p. 117.
81. Biografie, p. 11.
82. Stiller, p. 96.
83. Interpersonal relations plays an important role in mythology. An essential aspect of the Oedipus myth, for instance, which influenced the structure of Homo Faber, is the relationship between successive generations.
84. e.g. Sartre (Huis Clos), Genet (Les Bonnes) and the bleak world of Samuel Beckett.
85. Family life is important in the work of Strindberg, Ibsen and Kafka.
86. LAING, R.D.: The Politics of Experience and the Bird of Paradise, London, 1967, pp. 86-87.
87. LEACH, Edmund: A Runaway World? B.B.C., 1968, p. 45.

Chapter 2

1. The term "intellectual" will be used to refer to the particular personality type portrayed in Frisch's work. Frisch does not mean to imply that the attitudes characterizing his figure of the intellectual are typical of the intellectual in general.

2. Biografie, p. 29.

3. Homo Faber, p. 112.

4. Biografie, p. 26.

5. Ibid., p. 55.

6. The outsider theme has been treated by Sartre (La Nausée), Albert Camus (L'Etranger) and Franz Kafka (Der Prozeß).

7. Gantenbein, p. 69.

8. Die Schwierigen, p. 290.

9. Ibid., pp. 243-244.

10. e.g. Pelegrin: "Das Leben ist kurz ..." (Stücke 1, p. 12), Graf Öderland: "Kurz ist das Leben ..." (Stücke 1, p. 347).

11. Jurgensen, p. 14.

12. Ibid., p. 13.

13. Homo Faber, p. 212.

14. Gantenbein, p. 69.

15. Ibid., p. 154.

16. Die Schwierigen, p. 29.

17. Ibid., p. 244.

18. Gantenbein, p. 70.

19. Ibid., p. 70.
20. This theme is already evident in Die Schwierigen, where Yvonne's father dies of cancer.
21. Gantenbein, p. 135.
22. Ibid., pp. 135-136.
23. Stücke 1, pp. 305-406.
24. Die Schwierigen, p. 153.
25. Martin Esslin ("Max Frisch" in Natan (ed.): German Men of Letters Vol. III, London, 1964, pp. 307-319) suggests that the theme of the exotic in Frisch's work may be a response to his upbringing in a land-locked country.
26. This interpretation is supported by the Rittmeister's remark: "Er (Pelegrin) lebt, solange ich lebe" (Stücke 1, p. 24).
27. Stücke 1, p. 14.
28. Ibid., p. 81.
29. Ibid., p. 325.
30. The name "pilgrim" is significant, since Pelegrin represents a love of life and sensual experience which is almost a religious fervour.
31. Stücke 1, p. 48.
32. Jurgensen, p. 20.
33. Ibid., pp. 21-22.
34. Stücke 1, p. 49.
35. Homo Faber, p. 218.

36. Ibid., p. 220.
37. Ibid., p. 218.
38. Ibid., p. 218.
39. Ibid., p. 224.
40. Ibid., p. 218.
41. Ibid., p. 217.
42. Ibid., p. 215.
43. Ibid., p. 218.
44. Ibid., p. 215.
45. Gantenbein, p. 59.
46. e.g. Stiller, pp. 22-25, Homo Faber, pp. 66-67.
47. Stiller, p. 22.
48. e.g. Stiller, pp. 23-24.
49. Stiller, p. 25.
50. Stücke 1, p. 57.
51. Ibid., p. 56.
52. Ibid., p. 57.
53. The exotic is also linked with the couple through the figure of the "Mulattin", who is the partner in descriptions of the exotic. This figure is the basis of Florence in Stiller, Juana in Homo Faber and Helen in Biografie.
54. Stücke 1, p. 39.
55. Gantenbein, p. 148.
56. Stücke 1, p. 25.



57. Ibid., p. 24.
58. Homo Faber, p. 220.
59. Ibid., p. 88.
60. Biografie, p. 29.
61. Ibid., p. 52.
62. Ibid., p. 28.
63. Ibid., p. 115.
64. Ibid., p. 113.
65. External fate of this kind indicates the role of "Zufall" in the work of Frisch, since such events are dictated purely by chance.
66. Biografie, p. 15.
67. Ibid., p. 58.
68. Ibid., p. 30.
69. Ibid., p. 102. Manfred Jurgensen points out a new dimension of Frisch's play when he suggests that belief in fate can be interpreted as a belief in a deity (Jurgensen, p. 126).
70. Stücke 1, p. 61.
71. Die Schwierigen, p. 30.
72. Stiller, p. 259.
73. LIVINGSTONE, Rodney: "The World View of Max Frisch" in Southern Review (Adelaide), Vol. I, issue 3, 1963, p. 32.
74. Homo Faber, p. 224.
75. e.g. Homo Faber, pp. 122, 136, 163, 171.

76. Ibid., p. 239.

77. Stücke 1, p. 81.

78. The themes of alcoholism (Stiller and Enderlin), suicide (Joachim in Homo Faber, Alex in Stiller) and madness (Otto the milkman in Gantenbein) in Frisch's work can be interpreted as desperate attempts by the intellectual to escape his situation.

79. Stiller, p. 199.

### Chapter 3

80. Ibid., p. 195.

1. FRISCH, Max: A Wilderness of Mirrors, translated by Michael Bullock, London, 1965.

2. Notably Jean-Paul Sartre, Jean Genet and Paul Eluard.

3. Gantenbein, p. 67.

4. Ibid., p. 18.

5. Homo Faber, p. 213.

6. FRISCH, Max: Stücke Band 2, Frankfurt am Main, 1962.

7. Ibid., p. 164.

8. Ibid., pp. 191-192.

9. Ibid., p. 160.

10. Ibid., p. 166.

11. Ibid., p. 175.

12. Ibid., p. 189.

13. Ibid., p. 168.

14. Ibid., p. 188.

15. Ibid., p. 179.

16. Ibid., p. 179.
17. Stiller, pp. 55-59.
18. Ibid., p. 59.
19. Ibid., p. 59.
20. Tagebuch, p. 37.
21. KUSTOW, p. 183.
22. Stiller, p. 199.
23. Ibid., p. 195.
24. Ibid., p. 212.
25. Ibid., p. 198.
26. Ibid., p. 193.
27. Ibid., p. 194.
28. Ibid., pp. 198-199.
29. Ibid., p. 210.
30. Ibid., p. 216.
31. Ibid., p. 217.
32. Ibid., p. 69.
33. Ibid., p. 68.
34. Ibid., p. 68.
35. Ibid., p. 69.
36. Ibid., p. 69.
37. Ibid., p. 76.
38. Ibid., p. 78.
39. Ibid., p. 68.

40. Ibid., p. 82.
41. Ibid., p. 85.
42. Ibid., p. 86.
43. Ibid., p. 79.
44. Ibid., p. 78.
45. Ibid., p. 76.
46. Ibid., p. 251.
47. Ibid., pp. 78-79.
48. Ibid., p. 78.
49. Ibid., p. 79.
50. Stücke 2, p. 208.
51. Ibid., p. 251.
52. Tagebuch, p. 37.
53. Stücke 2, p. 245.
54. Ibid., p. 249.
55. Tagebuch, p. 35.
56. Stücke 2, p. 273.
57. ESSLIN, Martin: "Max Frisch", in Alex Natan (ed.):  
German Men of Letters, Vol. III, London, 1964, pp. 307-319.
58. ESSLIN, p. 318.
59. Stücke 2, p. 254.
60. KUSTOW, pp. 183-184.
61. The word "Bildnis" not only corresponds to the general term "image", but can also have the more concrete sense of "effigy".



62. Stiller, p. 159.
63. Ibid., p. 159.
64. Ibid., p. 160.
65. Ibid., p. 220.
66. Ibid., p. 221.
67. Ibid., p. 220.
68. Homo Faber, p. 28.
69. Ibid., p. 28.
70. Ibid., p. 91.
71. Ibid., pp. 111-112.
72. Ibid., p. 7.
73. Ibid., p. 19.
74. Ibid., p. 20.
75. Ibid., p. 37.
76. Ibid., p. 57.
77. Ibid., p. 69.
78. Stiller, p. 65.
79. Ibid., p. 65.
80. Ibid., p. 249.
81. Ibid., p. 133.
82. Tagebuch, p. 42.
83. Stiller, p. 249.
84. Ibid., p. 50.
85. Frisch's work can thus be interpreted against the

background of the "Sprachkrise" which has been a recurring feature of German literature since Hofmannsthal's Lord Chandos-Brief (1902).

86. Stiller, p. 114.
87. ESSLIN, p. 313.
88. Stiller, p. 9.
89. Ibid., p. 64.
90. Ibid., p. 64.
91. Tagebuch, p. 31.
92. Stiller, p. 89.
93. Tagebuch, p. 31.
94. Ibid., p. 32.
95. Stiller, p. 151.
96. JURGENSEN, p. 130.

#### Chapter 4

1. cf. Plato's Republic, Mary Wollstonecraft, A Vindication of the Rights of Woman (1792), John Stuart Mill, On the Subjection of Women (1869).

2. German universities were opened to women in 1896. The aristocracy had not denied its women an education, but it was only with the rise of the middle class that education for women became widespread in Western society as a whole.

3. Women first voted in Germany in 1919. In Switzerland

women have only very recently been granted voting rights. This fact has undoubtedly had some influence on Frisch's view of the problem.

4. BITHELL, J.: Modern German Literature 1880-1933, London, 1939.
5. Bithell quotes the names of a number of novels by minor women writers, mostly now ignored e.g. Ilse Frapan: Wir Frauen haben kein Vaterland, 1899, Marie Janitschek, Vom Weibe, 1896, Margarete von Bülow, Aus der Chronik derer von Riffelshausen, 1887.
6. SCHULZ, Gerhard: "Naturalism" in J.M. Ritchie (ed.): Periods in German Literature, London, 1966, pp. 199-225.
7. SCHULZ, p. 215.
8. IBSEN, Henrik: A Doll's House in The Oxford Ibsen, Vol. 5, London, 1961, p. 281.
9. Ibid., p. 282.
10. e.g. Stiller, pp. 39, 49.
11. Bedeutungswörterbuch, Der Große Duden, Band 10, Mannheim, 1970, p. 155.
12. Die Schwierigen, p. 47.
13. Stiller, p. 39.
14. Gantenbein, p. 204.
15. Ibid., pp. 204-205.
16. Ibid., p. 205.
17. Ibid., p. 35.

18. Ibid., p. 214.
19. Biografie, p. 24.
20. Finance is also a central problem in the relationship between Nora and Torvald in Ibsen's A Doll's House.
21. Gantenbein, p. 85.
22. Ibid., p. 35.
23. Biografie, p. 84.
24. Die Schwierigen, pp. 129-130.
25. The desire to be recognized as an individual links the figure of 'die Dame' with the problem of depersonalization treated in the preceding chapter.
26. Biografie, p. 20.
27. Ibid., pp. 20-21.
28. Ibid., p. 22.
29. Ibid., p. 84.
30. Gantenbein, p. 206.
31. Homo Faber, p. 172.
32. Ibid., p. 250.
33. Ibid., p. 131.
34. Biografie, p. 25.
35. Stiller, p. 233.
36. Ibid., p. 238.
37. Biografie, p. 86.
38. Gantenbein, p. 211.



39. Biografie, p. 86.
40. Ibid., p. 88.
41. Nora in A Doll's House also leaves her husband to seek a life of her own.
42. Biografie, p. 11.
43. Ibid., p. 84.
44. Stiller, p. 155.
45. Die Schwierigen, p. 23.
46. Ibid., p. 23.
47. Ibid., p. 27.
48. Ibid., p. 48.
49. Ibid., p. 50.
50. Ibid., p. 128.
51. Stiller, p. 70.
52. Ibid., p. 70.
53. Ibid., p. 80.
54. Öffentlichkeit als Partner, p. 8.
55. Stiller, p. 93.
56. Ibid., p. 106.
57. Ibid., p. 203.
58. e.g. Ernest Hemingway and Henri de Montherlant.
59. Stiller, p. 197.
60. Homo Faber, p. 94.
61. Ibid., p. 111.

62. Ibid., p. 111.
63. Ibid., pp. 77-78.
64. Gantenbein, p. 66.
65. Stiller, p. 76.
66. Gantenbein, p. 203.
67. Stiller, p. 77.
68. Ibid., pp. 77-78.

## Chapter 5

1. Gantenbein could be interpreted in the light of Zolà's theory of the "experimental novel", but Frisch, unlike Zolà, is not attempting to conduct a sociological experiment on strictly scientific lines.

2. Gantenbein, pp. 230-231.
3. Ibid., pp. 16-17.
4. Ibid., p. 19.
5. Ibid., p. 19.
6. Ibid., p. 41.
7. Ibid., p. 78.
8. Ibid., p. 32.
9. The world has often been seen as a stage and the people as actors playing a role upon it. cf. Shakespeare As You Like It, Schnitzler Der grüne Kakadu, Hofmannsthal Das Salzburger große Welttheater.

10. Gantenbein, p. 44.
11. Ibid., p. 98.
12. Ibid., p. 84.
13. Ibid., p. 41.
14. Ibid., p. 29.
15. Ibid., p. 28.
16. Ibid., p. 29.
17. Ibid., p. 100.
18. Ibid., p. 101.
19. Ibid., p. 104.
20. Ibid., p. 97.
21. Ibid., p. 26.
22. Ibid., p. 41.
23. BAUMGART, Reinhard: "Othello als Hamlet" in Beckermann,  
pp. 192-197.
24. Ibid., p. 193.
25. Gantenbein, p. 255.
26. Ibid., p. 29.
27. Ibid., p. 29.
28. Ibid., p. 35.
29. Ibid., p. 78.
30. Ibid., p. 102.
31. Ibid., p. 80.
32. Ibid., pp. 80-81. "Wannas-Theorie" (as Sibylle calls it)

which grants freedom to both partners, but when Sibylle attempts to

33. Ibid., p. 103.
34. Ibid., p. 81.
35. Ibid., p. 104.
36. Ibid., p. 104.
37. Ibid., p. 84.
38. Ibid., p. 81.
39. Ibid., p. 159.
40. Ibid., p. 100.
41. Ibid., p. 161.
42. Ibid., p. 167.
43. Ibid., p. 97.
44. Ibid., p. 194.
45. Ibid., p. 103.
46. Tagebuch, pp. 14-15.
47. Ibid., p. 60.
48. Ibid., p. 60.
49. Ibid., p. 17.
50. Gantenbein, p. 92.
51. Ibid., p. 190.
52. Ibid., p. 78.
53. Ibid., p. 81.
54. Ibid., p. 187.
55. Ibid., p. 188.
56. Rolf advocates a "Männer-Theorie" (as Sibylle calls it) which grants freedom to both partners, but when Sibylle attempts to



claim her freedom his reaction shows that Rolf is unable to live up to this theory.

57. Stiller, p. 242.
58. Ibid., pp. 154-165.
59. Ibid., p. 164.
60. Gantenbein, p. 228.
61. Ibid., p. 158. The use of the motif of blindness in this anecdote give the image a new dimension, since blindness can also be interpreted as representing the blindness of jealousy.
62. Ibid., p. 107.
63. Ibid., p. 108.
64. Ibid., p. 109.
65. Ibid., p. 259.
66. Ibid., p. 188.
67. Ibid., p. 185.
68. Ibid., p. 184.
69. Ibid., p. 186.
70. Ibid., p. 268.
71. Ibid., p. 108.
72. Die Schwierigen, p. 124.
73. Tagebuch, pp. 421-422.
74. Ibid., p. 425.
75. Ibid., p. 422.
76. Ibid., p. 423.

77. Ibid., p. 424.
78. Ibid., p. 424.
79. Ibid., p. 424.
80. Ibid., p. 425.
81. Homo Faber, p. 119.
82. Gantenbein, p. 184.
83. Ibid., p. 131.
84. Ibid., p. 131.

### Conclusion

1. BIENEK, Horst, "Max Frisch", in H.B., Werkstattgespräche mit Schriftstellern, München, 1962, p. 28.
2. Tagebuch, p. 141.
3. FRISCH, Max: Dramaturgisches, ein Briefwechsel mit Walter Höllerer, Berlin, 1969, p. 19.
4. BIENEK, p. 27.
5. Tagebuch, pp. 118-119.
6. Dramaturgisches, p. 34.
7. Ibid., p. 21.

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Berlin, 1969.

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N.B. A comprehensive bibliography of works on Frisch is to be found in Beckermann, Thomas (ed.): Über Max Frisch, Frankfurt, 1971, pp. 305-347.