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Minds, Bodies, and Memories:  
The Mind/Body Split in  
Christa Wolf's *Kassandra*<sup>1</sup>

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The postmodern movement in literary analysis re-evaluates the concept of history. No longer can scholars think in terms of absolute and unquestionable truths. Since the meaning of events comes from interpretation, the emphasis has shifted from validation to signification, and with this shift, the role of the interpreter becomes ever more noticeable. However, this signification raises the question of subjectivity. In her text *Teaching the Postmodern*, Brenda K. Marshall writes :

The poststructuralist decentering of the subject from the position from which reason emanates means that we may no longer perceive history as a linear construct which places the subject, in the present, in the privileged position of making sense of all that has come before—as if the subject were either ‘outside’ of history, or else the final moment toward which all history has marched . . . we are never ‘outside’ the labyrinth of discourse, we are never outside of a point of view or perspective which is always situated as a systematic function, within textuality. (148)

Marshall sees history as the telling of a story in narrative form, meaning that one cannot speak of a “history” but rather of “many histories” since the producer as well as the reader of a story/text are in subject positions; neither one is in a superior position. In that, the author, reader, and text are not separate from each other, the underlying pattern of Marshall’s model suggests an unfolding of non-binary thinking. Furthermore, since mind and body cannot be viewed as separate of each other this viewpoint questions the traditional discourses of the mind/body split as well. The binary construction of mind versus

body is radicalized when “mind” stands for culture/intellect/man, and “body” is equated with nature/emotions/woman. This separation of mind and body no longer functions when patterns of binary thinking are broken.

How could Descartes, then, understand his mind “outside” of his body? Can his argument “I think, therefore I am” still be applied in discourse today? Basing his formation of subjectivity on dualism, Descartes placed body and mind as two independent aspects in a hierarchical system, with the mind placed in a superior position outside the body. He questions anything that is perceived through the senses by analyzing bodily functions/sensations. Therefore, the inquisitive mind also gives substance to this “other,” called “body.” Subjectivity, then, becomes the unshakable point from which all knowledge, that is, the knowledge of corporeality, arises. But body is real. Body senses itself. Body knows itself.

### Freud and the Body

Freud’s psychoanalytic work on subjectivity lends itself to the exploration of a dualistic understanding of subjectivity. His attempt to connect the mind and the body in an interdependent system is well-known.<sup>1</sup> In his essay “The Ego and the Id,” he elaborates on the bodily ego, yet he also sees subjectivity as a dualistic understanding of external and internal perceptions.

In one of his last theoretical papers of 1922, Freud called the body “a surface:” “A person’s own body, and above all its surface, is a place from which both external and internal perceptions may spring” (15). According to Freud, the body facilitates perception; the body can remember and represent experiences. He elaborates further:

The ego is first and foremost a bodily ego; it is not merely a surface entity, but is itself the projection of a surface. The ego is ultimately derived from bodily sensations, chiefly from those springing from the surface of the body. It may thus be regarded as a mental projection of the surface of the body. (16)

Thus, Freud places the ego, not the body, as a mental projection. Here Freud’s view differs from that of Descartes. For Freud, bodily sensa-

tions trigger the formation of the ego. However, how can the ego exist without the body? If the mind perceives the ego through bodily sensations and therefore stands in direct relation to the body, an exclusionary understanding of body and mind is no longer possible, and a hierarchical order can no longer explain the complexity. Freud also equates the ego with perception and reason, while the id is signified by instinct and passion. But, does one have to exclude the other, or can they stand in relation to one another?

In her text *The Practice of Love*, Teresa De Lauretis develops a notion of the body drawing on Freud’s model. Thus, De Lauretis sees the “ego not located between the id and the superego, but the frontier between them and the external world” (22). According to De Lauretis, the body is the place of the frontier, the place where the negotiations (interactions) between the superego and the id happen.

Since De Lauretis’s analysis does not question the dualistic model as soon as the external world is juxtaposed onto the internal one, many questions arise: What is moving between these two positions? Can the boundaries of “internal” and “external” be redefined? What if there is an error in the perception of the body? What if this “frontier body” is not a frontier between “outside” and “inside” but a space without boundaries? If this is the case, what happens to the notion of perception? Since a body can experience itself—feel, touch, smell, hear, taste, and see itself—it can be a love object or a fetish to itself. The body can combine “inside” and “outside;” it can be object and subject at the same time. The body can experience itself holistically, perhaps it even strives for this experience.

In her work *Volatile Bodies*, Elizabeth Grosz challenges Freud’s dualism, analyzing the role of the body in Freud’s writings. In the introduction, Grosz writes: “Bodies have all the explanatory power of minds” (vii). Searching to define this power, Grosz concentrates “on the contributions psychoanalytic theory has made to understand how the body functions, not simply as a biological entity but as a psychical, lived relation, and the ways in which the psyche is a projection of the body’s form” (27).

Unlike Freud and De Lauretis, Grosz understands that the body and mind experiences are not limited to a concept of “inside” and “outside,” instead Grosz sees these experiences as a surface upon which multiple spaces exist simultaneously. These spaces are inter-

connected and interdependent and reflect each other. Thus, Grosz's model removes the Cartesian body/mind split and establishes a body and mind inter-relationship. What, in turn, emerges in these body/mind spaces is a subjectivity inclusive of mind and body experiences.

Grosz speaks in this context of "double sensations:" "Double sensations are those in which the subject utilizes one part of the body to touch another, thus exhibiting the interchangeability of active and passive sensations, of those of subject and object, mind and body" (35). Grosz sets this experience of sensation as being parallel to the notion of the "Möbius strip." In this "double sensation" the boundaries fall away, and "inside" becomes "outside" and vice versa. The formerly dualistic positions cross, meet, and touch each other: "The Möbius strip has the advantage of showing the inflection of mind into body and body into mind, the ways in which, through a kind of twisting or inversion, one side becomes another" (Grosz xii). Grosz compares this notion to what Freud describes as "the two neuroses traversing between the mind/body split, hysteria and hypochondria which both involve a somatization of psychological conflicts" (Grosz 38). She further points out that, in Freud's model, these neuroses are "sexually coded as 'feminine' in which it is precisely the status of the female body that is causing the psychological conflict" (38).

Why, then, are women thought to somatize their bodies? Are women less able to live with the body/mind split than men are? Or, do men not experience the body/mind split? Is the human experience so different for each gender? I think not. Nevertheless, Freud's theoretical essays imply this essentialist notion. He marks the space of mind and body interaction with pathological premises and by doing so excludes possibilities to explore the frontier space (the mind and body connection) as a place of interrelation and health. In this way, Freud creates a pathological model for the body and mind relationship, and he transposes this pathological model onto the "feminine" body, setting a pattern in discourse which is challenged by feminist scholars De Lauretis and Grosz. Their works raise the following questions, "What if mind and body feel one another as part of each other?" "Where does such an understanding place the role of hysteria, neuroses, etc.?" And in particular, "What happens to the traditional understanding of 'Wahnsinn'?"

### Christa Wolf: Minds, Bodies, and Memories

Sind vernunftbegabte Wesen denkbar,  
die nicht die Spaltung des heutigen Menschen  
in Leib/Seele/Geist kennen,  
sie gar nicht verstehen können?<sup>2</sup>

The Cartesian mind/body split is pathologized in Freud's work and thus has a value judgment attached. As mentioned before, Freud understands the space created when body and mind traverse as a neurosis and terms this movement as a "feminine" phenomena. I carefully examine this space, or this moment of interaction of body and mind, in Christa Wolf's *Kassandra*.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, I analyze the role of body-memories, understanding Wolf's *Kassandra* as a historiographic metafiction.<sup>4</sup> I develop the notion that corporeality remembers and, with this re-membrance, the body has an intrinsic relationship to the mind.

Body and mind cannot be separated in discourse or in life. Body-memory is shaped by dramatic instances, moments of such intense physical/sensory experiences which inscribe themselves on the body and trigger a memory at any given time. Corporeality, also, has a memory of its own. Likewise, in *Kassandra*, the traditional body and mind split is challenged. A space of ambiguity emerges. In some instances, the body is still constructed as separate from the mind. Yet, in this separation, the body re-members and with re-membling, it stands in direct relation to the mind once again. I deconstruct *Kassandra*, hoping to elucidate the surface of contact, that is, the spaces created when *Kassandra* remembers her mind-body connection.

I read *Kassandra* as a testimony about war, so it is by no means a seamless representation of a historical character. In *Voraussetzungen einer Erzählung*, Wolf makes the reader aware of her work-in-progress style: "Das Gewebe, das ich Ihnen nun vorlegen will, ist nicht ganz ordentlich geworden, nicht mit einem Blick überschaubar, manche seiner Motive sind nicht ausgeführt, manche seiner Fäden verschlungen" (VE 7). Wolf reminds the reader that her view of histories is not all-inclusive. Therefore, her work should be seen as a web of interrelations between the past, present and future, all of which are shaped by memories. But what are memories? Wolf describes memo-

ries as medallions, fossilized images and experiences locked forever in a hardened, unchangeable form:

Anscheinend brauchen wir für unser Leben die Zustimmung und Unterstützung der Phantasie. Das heißt: das Spiel mit offenen Möglichkeiten. Zugleich aber geht etwas anderes in uns vor, täglich, stündlich - ein schleichender, kaum vermeidbarer Prozeß: Verhärtung, Versteinierung, Gewöhnung. Besonders macht er sich über die Erinnerung her. ("Medaillons" 478)

In this way, memory has the tendency to become encrusted, to become a hard object. Yet, it is exactly this process of fossilization that Wolf writes against. Indeed, Wolf creates Cassandra as a self-reflecting character. Standing in front of the lion gate at Mycenae, Cassandra experiences her fear as a process of remembering. She recognizes the formation of her medallion: "Jetzt wird der Kern geschliffen" (K 11). She reflects and becomes aware of the danger of her own memories. Thus, Cassandra is no more exempt from the formation of fossilized habituations than any other person. Wolf wants to play with endless possibilities and not suffocate under turned-to-stone habituation. Medallions appear in several different forms: Western metaphysics, master narratives of gender hierarchy, as well as the traditional representation of history. Challenging the formation and representation of such medallions is among Wolf's aims in *Kassandra*.

Revisiting the past also means to shed a different light on the great heroes of the past. Wolf provides Achilles as an instance of traditionally considered heroic actions. Thus, Cassandra sees his arrival on the coast of Troy as adversarial:

Ein Pulk von Griechen, dicht bei dicht sich haltend, gepanzert und die Schilde um sich herum wie eine lückenlose Wand, stürmte, einem Organismus gleich, mit Kopf und Gliedern, unter nie vernommenem Geheul an Land. Die äußersten, so war es wohl gemeint, wurden von den schon erschöpften Troern bald erschlagen. Die der Mitte zu erschlugen eine viel zu hohe Zahl der unsern. Der Kern, so sollte es sein, erreichte das Ufer, und der Kern des Kerns: der

Griechenheld Achill. (K 83-4)

Wolf's picture of Achilles's arrival fits the description of an encapsulated, hence encrusted, historiographic memory of the fall of Troy. Wolf juxtaposes his arrival to a medallion revealing another side of Achilles—his lust to kill: "Wie näherte sich dieser Feind dem Bruder. Als Mörder? Als Verführer? Ja gab es das denn, Mörderlust und Liebeslust in einem Mann? . . . Das tänzelnde Herannah des Verfolgers, den ich jetzt von hinten sah, ein geiles Vieh" (K 85). Achilles kills one of Cassandra's brothers, a person to whom she felt very close. As a witness to Achilles's lust to kill, she offers a different picture of the great war hero. He is not at all like the statue of himself; he is not at all frozen in a heroic pose. Instead, through killing, he feels lust and desire, pleasure and greed; his brutal sexuality is visible. His body has the likeness of a throbbing animal; Cassandra does not question his animalness. The telling of her experiences illustrate the lack of self-reflection present in "patriarchal paradigms."

In her essay "Counter-Memory and Historiographic Metafiction," Marshall exclaims: "Because our history of Western metaphysics takes place within a tradition of the subject as male, an attempted return to the origin in history often reproduces or substantiates a patriarchal system" (158). Likewise, Wolf's *Kassandra* retells the past in an attempt to breach the "patriarchal paradigm" which surrounded the fall of Troy and the representation of the war hero Achilles. This time, a woman tells the story and, from her point of view, history looks completely different. Cassandra lived in a time when history was conveyed through an oral tradition. One spoke aloud of the past because the actual writing down of historical events was just emerging and in the hands of male story-tellers and note-takers: "Die Täfelchen der Schreiber, die in Troias Feuer härteten, überliefern die Buchführung des Palastes, Getreide, Krüge, Waffen, Gefangene. Für Schmerz, Glück, Liebe gibt es keine Zeichen. Das kommt mir wie ein ausgesuchtes Unglück vor" (K 89).

In this context, the notion of a "weibliches Schreiben" presents itself. Wolf wonders, perhaps if women had been included in the writing of histories, a different history would have unfolded. Women's narrative forms would have given a different basis for the theories (particularly Freud's use of narratives as representation of early "case-stu-

dies"), which have shaped Western philosophical thought. Wolf writes in her third lecture:

Schreiben für Frauen als ein Mittel, das sie zwischen sich und die Männerwelt legen . . . Unvermeidlich der Moment, da die Frau schreibt (die, im Falle Cassandra, 'sieht'), nichts und niemand mehr vertritt, nur sich selbst, aber wer ist das. Gibt es das ominöse Recht (oder die Pflicht) zur Zeugenschaft? (VE 90)

It is extremely important for Cassandra to give her testimony: "Ich will Zeugin bleiben, auch wenn es keinen einzigen Menschen mehr geben wird, der mir mein Zeugnis abverlangt" (K 27). On the one hand, the act of testifying makes it possible for her to become the subject; on the other hand, the act of speaking/writing of her experiences facilitates another perception of a particular situation. The question arises: What makes the writings of a woman different from the writings of a man? In her text *Cassandra: Über Christa Wolf*, Sonja Hilzinger paraphrases Wolf and presupposes three moments of female writing:

1. eine andere Erfahrung von Realität, die auf historischen und sozialen Unterschieden zwischen den Geschlechtern sowie auf der Tatsache eines Gewaltverhältnisses beruht, worin die Frauen die Unterlegenen waren und sind;
2. ein selbstbewußter Widerstand gegen das aus 'männlichem' Denken erwachsende 'wahnsinnige' Realitätsprinzip;
3. Einheit von Schreiben und Leben, von ästhetischem Ausdruck und Autonomiestreben. (14)

Cassandra lived in a cultural context different from that of male historians. Her experiences were shaped by her object position; the cultural codex required her to live under its principles. Furthermore, she was not in a position to formulate decisions concerning the Trojan government. When she attempted to speak up in front of the council, her father had her arrested. Therefore, Cassandra's visions, that is, the body and mind connection, were not understood as a gift of prophecy. Instead, they were identified as insanity by an unquestioned prin-

ciple: a male-determined reality principle.

Cassandra thematizes this difference after she has visited the women who live in the caves: "Wie viele Wirklichkeiten gab es in Troia noch außer der meinen, die ich doch für die einzige gehalten habe" (K 24). Furthermore, who is to say that Cassandra's reality is defined by her madness? Perhaps the true madness lies not in Cassandra's gift of prophesee, but in the madness-filled reality of the men in power. Perhaps this is the "Wahndenken."

Wolf wrote the *Cassandra*-readings in 1982 during a time of Western European rearmament. Indeed, Wolf was terrified of the possibility of nuclear war. For her, the "real" insanity meant the perception that war could solve problems. Wolf writes:

Was meine ich eigentlich, wenn ich "Wahndenken" sage? Ich meine die Absurdität der Behauptung, eine exzessive atomare Aufrüstung beider Seiten mindere als "Gleichgewicht des Schreckens" die Kriegsgefahr; biete auf die Dauer auch nur ein Minimum an Sicherheit. Ich meine die groteske Kalkulation mit Strategien, die schon auf konventionellen Waffenarten bezogen verheerend waren, auf Atomwaffen bezogen sinnlos, irrational geworden sind, wie es der zynische Satz ausdrückt: Wer als erster zuschlägt, wird als zweiter sterben. (VE 87)

I suggest that Cassandra has a similar belief. For her, war is filled with deception. Once Cassandra discovered Helena's abduction as false and her father's only concern was the honor of the kingdom, she realized the insanity of the situation. Thus, the reasoning behind the decision to go to war was void of any understanding of the suffering, rape, slaying, and torment of people. Indeed, the body and mind connection did not weigh in the decision of the men in power. Their cerebral decision places insanity into a completely opposite position. If the mind/body split is complete, regardless of female or male somatization, the human experience becomes worthless. When decisions are entirely based on thought, the complete human experience is disregarded. Where is this argumentation in the writings of Freud?

Nevertheless, Cassandra does listen to her father and succumbs to his demands to keep quiet: "Da versprach ich ihm, das Wissen um die schöne Helena geheimzuhalten und ging unangefochten von ihm

weg" (K 81). Indeed, Cassandra is caught in a vicious web. On the one hand, she wants to become a speaking subject, yet, on the other hand, she adheres to her father's expectations. Cassandra does not succeed in her autonomy or in her attempt to find comfort in her body/mind connection:

In einem Strom von Erinnerungen, Assoziationen, Überlegungen, Deutungen und Umdeutungen ihrer Erfahrung stellt sich Cassandra ihrer eigenen Geschichte. Es ist die uralte und ganz gegenwärtige Geschichte einer Frau, die zum Objekt gemacht werden soll. Sozial gebunden an die herrschende Oberschicht, emotional gefesselt an ihren Vater, an die Geschichte und Gegenwart des Königshauses, erlebt sie einen schweren, langwierigen Prozeß der Loslösung.<sup>5</sup>

Kassandra resists becoming anybody's object; her task is to become a subject. Her desire to achieve subjectivity is embodied in her need to see and speak: ". . . ich zog Lust aus allem, was ich sah—Lust; Hoffnung nicht! . . . Warum wollte ich die Sehergabe unbedingt? Mit meiner Stimme sprechen: das Äußerste" (K 6). Everything that Cassandra sees evokes desire in her. She desires the gift of prophesee and, with this, comes her voice. "Das Glück, ich selbst zu werden und dadurch den anderen nützlicher—ich hab es noch erlebt" (K 15).

*Kassandra* is the only text by Wolf written in the first person. Since Wolf problematizes the significance of first person narratives in her other work, particularly in *Kindheitsmuster*, I see a connection between the desire to become a subject and her usage of the personal pronoun "I." Therefore, a close reading of Wolf's usage of first person in all her texts is crucial. Wolf's "I" has to have a body. How is this body constituted? Again, body and mind stand in a tight relation to each other. One cannot exist without the other. Both constitute the subject: "Ich mache die Schmerzprobe . . . Wie der Arzt, um zu prüfen, ob es abgestorben ist, ein Glied ansticht, so stech ich mein Gedächtnis an" (K 8). Pain triggers memory for Cassandra. For example, once she remembers the pain, the pictures of the past start to emerge. But what is pain, if not a body experience? Cassandra re-members her relationship to Myrine and Penthesilea, the two Amazons, who simultaneously evoke pain and desire in her: "Endlich nach so langer Zeit

wieder mein Körper. Wieder der heiße Stich durch mein Inneres . . . wie mächtig die Lust gewesen war" (K 9). But Cassandra also wants to control her emotions since they give her such desire and pain: "Jetzt kann ich brauchen, was ich lebenslang geübt: meine Gefühle durch Denken besiegen. Die Liebe früher, jetzt die Angst." (K 11)

But why does Cassandra experience herself in a body/mind split? Why then can she not see herself as whole? Cassandra's initial question, "Wird der Körper die Herrschaft über mein Denken übernehmen?" (K 26) supports her binary body perception. And she goes on to say:

. . . daß ich, gespalten in mir selbst, mir selber zuseh, unter meinem Tuch, von Angst geschüttelt. Wird ich, um mich nicht vor Angst zu winden, um nicht zu brüllen wie ein Tier - wer, wenn nicht ich, sollt das Gebrüll der Opfertiere kennen! - . . . werd ich um des Bewußtseins willen bis zuletzt mich selber spalten, eh das Beil mich spaltet . . . (K 27)

She must have learned to perceive herself in this broken way during childhood experiences. Indeed, Cassandra remembers the death of another brother, whom she loved very much as a child. He killed himself after his wife died during the birth of their first child. Therefore, Cassandra is jealous of her sister-in-law who often greeted her husband ". . . mit einem Lächeln . . . das mir ins Fleisch schnitt" (K 51). Already at this point, the young Cassandra experiences the emotional loss of her brother. She feels betrayed and in her pain starts to scream: "Ihn wollte ich wiederhaben, mit Haut und Haar, schrie ich, ihn, ihn, ihn, ihn" (K 51). At this point, she first hears her mother Hekabe identifying her behavior as insane:

Sie ist von Sinnen. Hekabe die Mutter hat mit Armen, in denen Männerkraft steckte, meine zuckenden bebenden Schultern gegen die Wand gedrückt - immer das Zucken meiner Glieder, immer die kalte harte Wand gegen sie, Leben gegen Tod, die Kraft der Mutter gegen meine Ohnmacht. (K 51)

This identification sets a pattern for young Cassandra who will experience many more such episodes. Under the care of her mother,

Kassandra's body reactions will be drugged, leaving her in dream-filled sleep, perceiving her body as beast and the minds of the others as superior. Her mother Hekabe places a value judgment on young Kassandra, marking her to struggle for her entire life to misunderstand her body and mind connection.

Later, on the outskirts of the city, in the caves of the women who live under the protection and guidance of Kybele, goddess of nature, Kassandra finds a different reality. She watches the women dance in adoration of their goddess:

Marpessa glitt in den Kreis, der meine Ankunft nicht einmal bemerkte – . . . der sein Tempo allmählich steigerte, seinen Rhythmus verstärkte, schneller, fordernder, ungestümer wurde, einzelne **Tänzerinnen** aus dem Kreis schleuderte . . . sie zu Gesten trieb, die mein **Schamgefühl** verletzten, bis sie außer sich gerieten, sich **schüttelten**, sich heulend verrenkten, in eine Ekstase verfielen . . . in sich zusammensackten und **erschöpft niedersanken**. (K 24, emphasis is mine)

I compare this passage to the passage when Kassandra throws a fit after she has heard that Kalchas, the prophet, has joined the Greeks. Kassandra lets her voice free and willingly experiences what follows:

Schlotterned, **gliederschüttelnd** hing ich an ihm, jeder meiner Finger tat was er wollte . . . und meine Beine, die ich so wenig in der Gewalt hatte wir irgendein andres Glied, zuckten und **tanzten** in einer **anrühigen unpassenden Lust** . . . In die **Umnachtung**, in die ich endlich **fiel**, flog mir ein Fünckchen Triumph voraus. (K 46, emphasis is mine)

Although these two instances describe two different situations, the similarities of the description are evident and support the fact that the autonomous women, living apart from the organized society in the city, experience what Kassandra experiences. They, however, see their behavior as a manifestation of corporeality and mind; they identify neither Kassandra nor themselves as split and insane. For these women, "body" means "to be whole and healthy." Nevertheless, they are shut out from society and its male determined reality principles. They are

not accepted by the Mycenaen culture and have to live apart from it. Indeed, the cave women, that is, a subculture, function among themselves on different principles; they are concerned with communicating with each other, with sharing and learning about each other's dreams and most intimate thoughts. But most of all they are concerned with the people that will live after them (K 149). Therefore, they want to leave messages for the future, but unable to write, the women of the caves develop a "body-language." Indeed, they carve animal and people symbols, as well as symbols of themselves into the walls of the caves; they press their hands one next to the other into the wet clay in the belief they can become immortal. Kassandra lives with the women in the caves for two years and experiences a connection to them and herself as well as her body. She is one of them. Among them, her body/mind interrelation is the gift of insight.

In the world of her father and the kingdom, however, Kassandra is considered insane; her corporeality is not valued as equal to her mind. Her drive to become a prophet to see and to speak, to live autonomously from her family's belief-system is met with resistance and punishment: "Priamos der König hatte drei Mittel gegen eine Tochter, die ihm nicht gehorchte: Er konnte sie für wahnsinnig erklären. Er konnte sie einsperren. Er konnte sie zu einer ungewollten Heirat zwingen" (K 90). And indeed, the king deals with Kassandra's independence in exactly these three ways. First, she is identified as insane by her mother, who has arms like a man. Then Priamos locks Kassandra away (K 144) and finally forces her to an undesired wedding (K 151).

Kassandra's mind/body split is supported through her experiences as a child and teenager. She has learned to disregard her body experiences as valuable and to identify her corporeality as animal-like. Although she lived in an alternative environment, although she is self-aware of her medallions, she cannot overcome her learned perception of herself. Her behavior falls back into the Cartesian hierarchical system, as well as the Freudian notion of neuroses. Kassandra somatizes her psychological conflicts; she does subordinate her body to her mind. Perhaps this explains why she can give up her body for a "higher ideal." In the end, it is her mind standing separately that perceives the ego through the bodily sensations, but interprets these perceptions as insane. Because of the cultural reality principles in which Kassandra

lives, she cannot free herself of them and falls back into the established binary order.

It becomes clear why Cassandra chose death as her destiny. In a society where she is misunderstood, especially by her parents, she cannot exist. Her death, then, symbolizes the dangerous trappings of a culture that adheres to binary thought patterns. I regard her death not as a heroic moment, but as her complete defeat.

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### Notes

<sup>1</sup>In the beginning of his essay "The Ego and the Id," Freud attempts to identify the workings of the mind, but he restrains from using the term "mind." Instead he introduces the concept of "thought-processes." He explains: "All perceptions which are received from without (sense-perceptions) and from within—what we call sensations and feelings—are consciousness from the start. But what about those internal processes which we may—roughly and inexactly—sum up under the name of thought-processes?" (9). For the purpose of this paper, I use the term mind.

<sup>2</sup>Wolf, *Voraussetzungen einer Erzählung* 88. All further quotations from this work will be given parenthetically in the text as VE followed by the page number.

<sup>3</sup>All further quotations from this work will be given parenthetically in the text as K followed by the page number.

<sup>4</sup>Historiography as the telling of history in narrative form. See White's concept of "metahistory," which identifies historiography as a poetic construct.

<sup>5</sup>Wolf, *Kassandra*, jacket cover

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