

Christa Wolf, Cassandra

what is cassandra about?

critique of industrial modernity, east and west

is it a utopia/dystopia?... it's a parable against socialist realism

absence of 'positive hero' of socialist realism

some see cassandra as critique of enlightenment.

what is enlightenment?

what does cassandra 'say' about rationality?

8/ conquer feelings with thought (enlightenment)

binary oppositions:

- feelings/thought
- trojans/greeks
- man/woman
- sun/moon
- rulers/ruled
- friends/foe
- right/wrong

as king priam's daughter, she knows and is complicit with law

62-63/ wolf torn bw conformity and questioning

at end, she makes her critique clear:

115/ how can you draw such distinctions in this moment of crisis?

cass choses male profession, and forfeits her femininity

selbstfindung

true to self, unto death

objective failure/inner moral victory

selbstfindung is a kind of utopian project

12/ she finds happiness, becomes useful to society

this is outside time and space u-topic

self-change, self-realization

of what is cassandra an allegory?

what is allegory?

1. Description of a subject under the guise of some other subject of aptly suggestive resemblance.

2. Allegory is a form of extended metaphor,
in which objects, persons, and actions...
in a narrative,

are equated with the meanings
that lie outside the narrative itself.

The underlying meaning has
moral, social, religious, or political significance...

and characters are often
personifications of abstract ideas as charity, greed, or
envy.

Thus an allegory is a story with two meanings,
a literal meaning and a symbolic meaning.

examples:

plato's allegory of the cave

troy and gdr-- shared fate

transition from trojanism (more matriarchal, sensual) to hellenism (patriarchal order)

words win out over images, reason over feeling

136/ doesn't leave with aeneas bc she doesn't want 'hero' or 'statue'

cass doesn't really speak. but her body speaks.

cass looks for third way (utopian alternative) ***106-07, 118

but who is this 'we'? women, trojans, prehistoric...?

question _____ what are the utopian possibilities of the novel?

121/ procession leading 'nowhere on earth'

138/ stones seem to move [utopian hope]

MIT OpenCourseWare
<http://ocw.mit.edu>

21G.017 Germany and its European Context
Fall 2002

For information about citing these materials or our Terms of Use, visit: <http://ocw.mit.edu/terms>.