



**«Reality is always a bit
further afield than
the latest news ...»**

**On the Life and Works
of Heinrich Böll**

böll
FAKTEN

	Page
Preface	2
Who was Heinrich Böll?	4–5
What are his most important novels?	6–7
How did he go about his work?	8–9
Was Böll an active member of a political party?	10–11
How formative was his time as a soldier in WW2?	12–13
How important was religion for him?	14–15
Why was Böll dubbed «the conscience of the nation»?	16–17
How and why did he champion human rights?	18–19
Where did Böll spend his life?	20–21
Why was Ireland so important to Böll?	22–23
Did Böll address environmental concerns?	24–25
Why did Böll fight the tabloid «BILD»?	26–27
Why should Böll still be read?	28–29
Timeline	30–33
Awards and Honors	34–35
Photo credits and literature	36

Preface

«Meddling is the only way to stay relevant.» – Heinrich Böll's (1917-1985) dictum is the motto of the foundation that bears his name, a foundation with close ties to the German Green Party. This choice of name may surprise, especially when compared to the other German political foundations who all bear the names of politicians – politicians closely connected to the respective political camps and thus their related foundations. But a writer like Heinrich Böll? A chronicler of post-war society who never joined a political party? During his final years, however, Böll was close to the Greens and shared their commitment for human rights and environmentalism.

Fifty years ago, in December 1972, Heinrich Böll, was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature as the first German post-1945. For us, this anniversary is an occasion to remember the great author, who was, at once, an intellectual, a moralist, a citizen of Cologne, a Catholic, a smoker, a philanthropist, and a family man. Heinrich Böll has continued to be relevant, and his works are still studied in school, including *The «Lost Honor of Katharina Blum, Group Portrait with Lady»*, and numerous of his short stories. In many respects he was what today would be labeled an «activist», as he campaigned for persecuted artists and dissidents from around the world – and because he got involved and «meddled» in many ways.

The following is a brief introduction to the life and works of the man whose name we proudly bear – and hopefully it will lead to a journey of literary discovery. We wish you pleasant reading!

Annette Maennel
Head of Communication, Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung

«Our imagination
is real too...»

From: *The Contemporary and Reality* (1954)

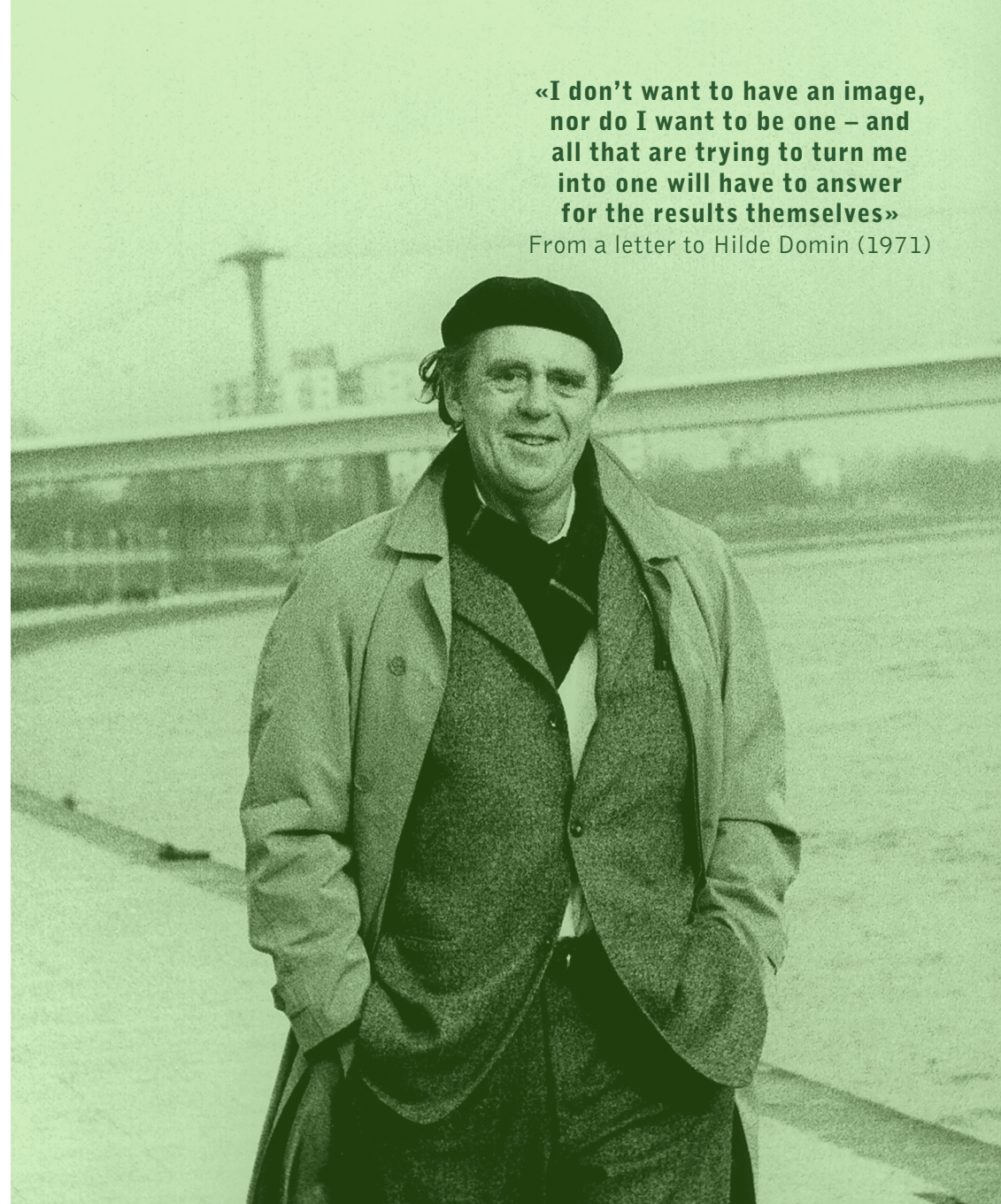
Who was Heinrich Böll?

Heinrich Böll has been labeled in many different ways. Some of his contemporaries called him a «moralist», others «naive», and for cynics he was a «bleeding heart». Some saw in him an intellectual forbear of the RAF terrorists, for Catholics he was too far on the left, while the Left viewed him as too Catholic. For some critics his works were too «parochial», while others called them a «chronicle of the Bonn Republic», and still others praised the variety of forms he used in his novels. Some lauded his «modesty», while others thought his public appearances lacked in pomp and distinguished rhetoric. Abroad he was seen as a «different kind of German» and his writing as an example of the new West Germany, while conservative West German papers saw in him a «traitor of his own people» because he wouldn't budge and continued to point out grievances and abuses. Böll himself always rejected all labels and efforts to co-opt him. As a matter of fact, Böll was a Nobel

laureate in literature, a translator, a dedicated citizen, president of PEN International, a honorary professor, and he was bestowed the Freedom of the City of Cologne. He was one of the best-known German writers after World War II, someone who, at a young age, had already the desire to become a writer and to be able to make his living that way. In the essay «About Myself» he stated: «I had always wanted to write and I tried my hand early, yet it was only later that I found the right words.» To this we would like to add that Heinrich Böll was neither politician nor diplomat, he was Heinrich Böll. Stubbornness and independence were his strengths. He was only bound to his own free conscience – and it is this that made him a political and moral force of the highest order. His works and his commitment are two sides of the same medal. Heinrich Böll was an artist and an intellectual who's writings still speak to us today more than some may think.

**«I don't want to have an image,
nor do I want to be one – and
all that are trying to turn me
into one will have to answer
for the results themselves»**

From a letter to Hilde Domin (1971)

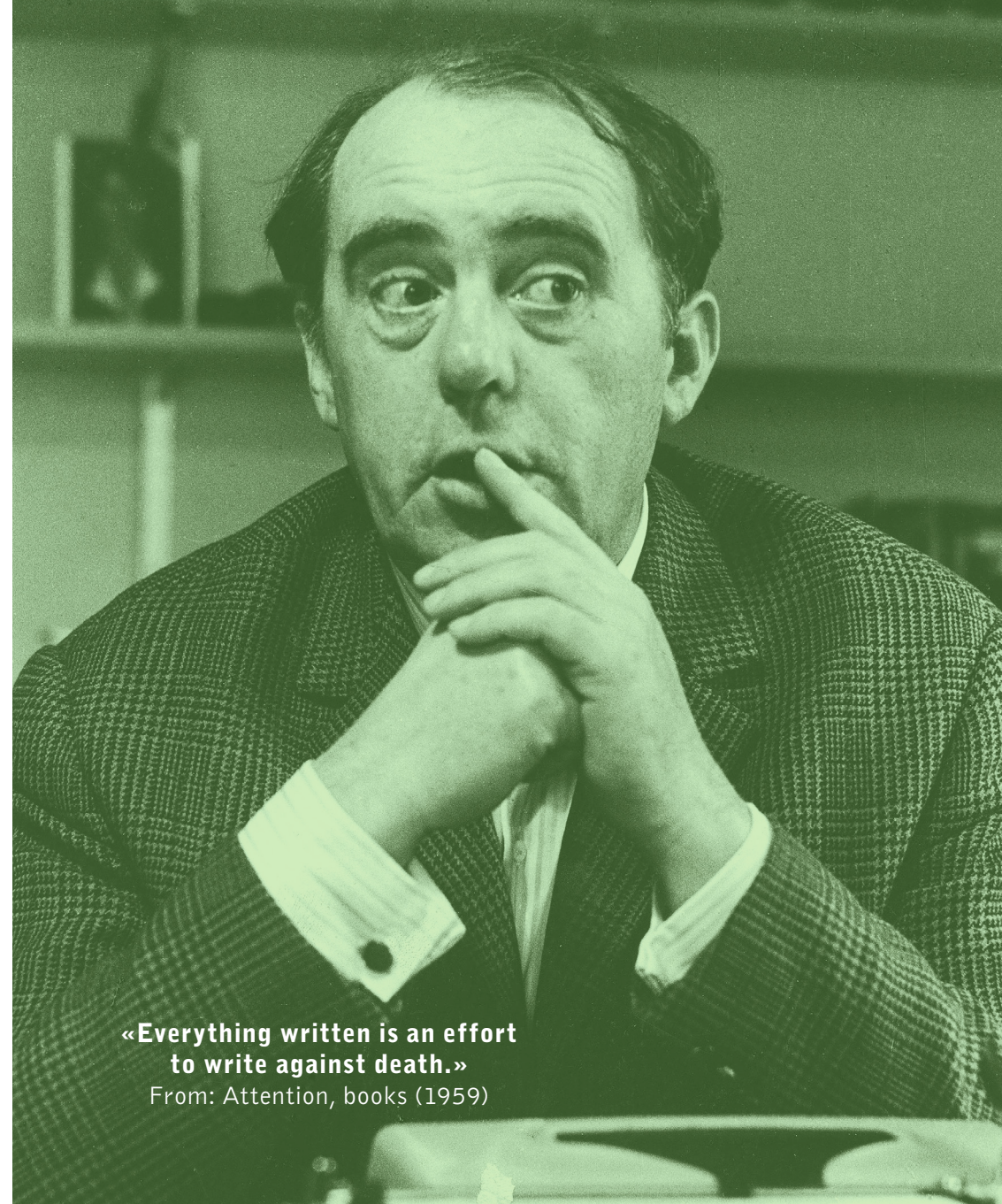


What are his most important novels?

Heinrich Böll's regular work as a writer started in November 1946. He wrote novels such as «Cross Without Love» and «The Angel was Silent» that were published only after his death, as well as numerous short stories, dramatic scenes, essays, and poems. The subject of his work were his experiences in Nazi Germany, during the war, and the immediate post-war period. Some examples of this are the stories «The Train was on Time» and «Stranger, Bear Word to the Spartans We...» In 1951 his first novel «And where were you, Adam?» was published. After 1952, Böll increasingly addressed contemporary West German issues and, in a short space of time, a number of novels appeared, among them «The Unguarded House» (1954). In 1959 Böll published the novel «Billiards at Half-Past Nine», in which he tried to depict contemporary West Germany as the product and continuation of historic developments stretching from the German Empire to the Bonn Republic. Böll's 1963 novel «The Clown» triggered heated debates. In his lifetime, Heinrich Böll authored about 1,600 «works», about half of them during the

period until 1970 when most of his writing was narrative. The following period was dominated by interviews, essays, and opinion pieces on current events, and it is those pieces, above all, that have shaped his image as a committed intellectual, an incisive thinker, and a defender of the freedom of expression. In 1971 Böll's most highly regarded novel «Group Portrait with Lady» came out, a book explicitly mentioned as the crowning achievement of his work by the Nobel committee when awarding him the 1972 Nobel Prize in Literature. «The Lost Honor of Katharina Blum» (1974) garnered a lot of media attention, as it was a thinly veiled attack on the BILD tabloid. Five years later «The Safety Net» (1979) came out, and his novel «Women in a River Landscape» was published posthumously in 1985.

Böll's works have been translated into many languages and most of his novels were made into movies. The complete works of Heinrich Böll have been published by Kiepenheuer & Witsch, and, starting in 2002, an annotated edition in 27 volumes began to appear.



**«Everything written is an effort
to write against death.»**

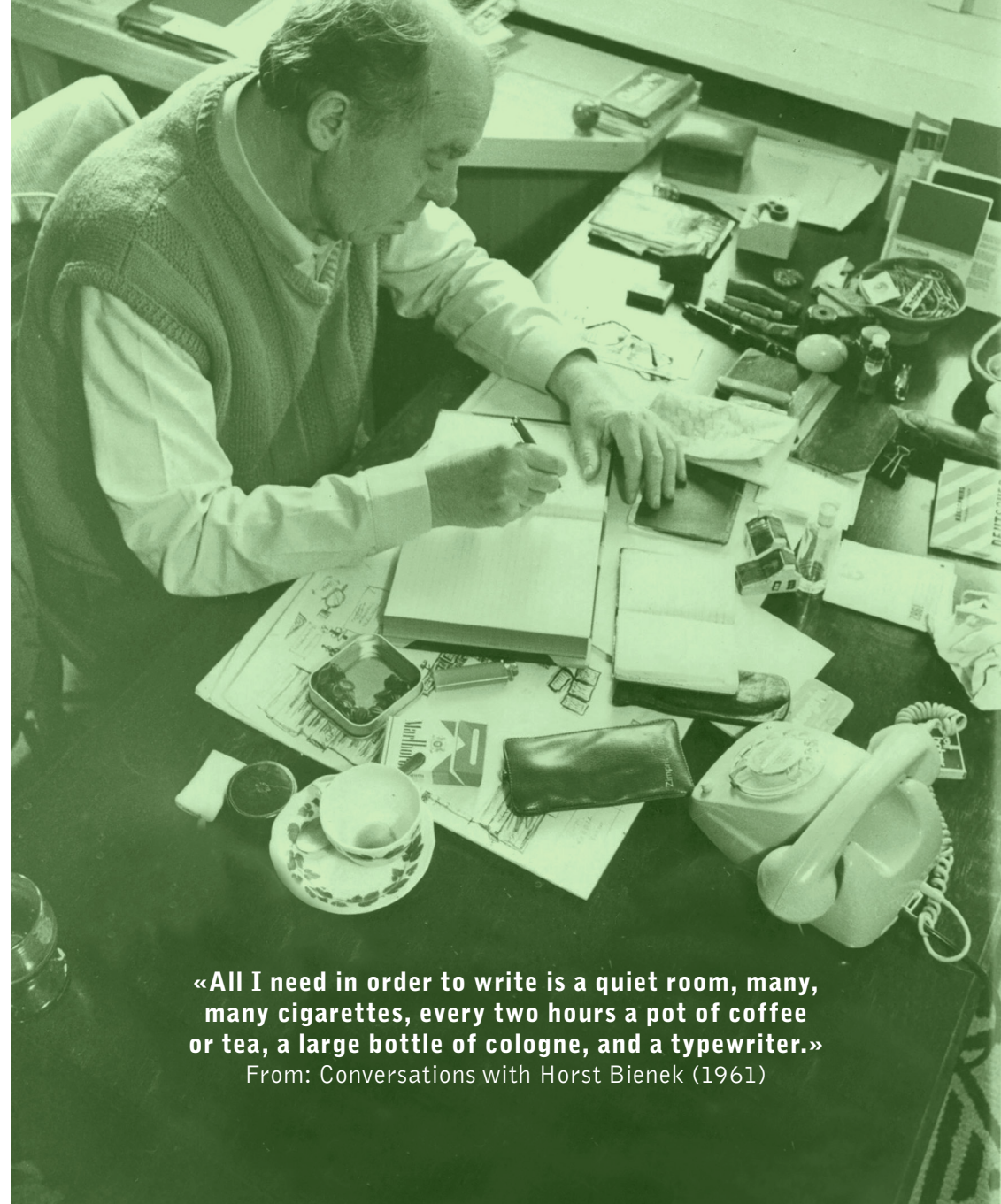
From: Attention, books (1959)

How did he go about his work?

Heinrich Böll wrote his works on a mechanical typewriter. To him, the loud clickety-clack of the keys was part of the process of production. The first pages were often typed without punctuation and disregarding upper and lower case. Subsequently, such pages were edited by hand and structured. For the next version, Heinrich Böll would retype each page including the edits – and continuing in this way, a number of versions would be created. For novels covering extended time periods, he would do large colored sketches that enabled him to get an overview of what he was working on, and these sketches he put up on the wall of his study, as they helped him not only to control his plots, characters, and their interrelationships but also facilitated composition. In his «Nobel Lecture» Heinrich Böll described his «workbench» thus: «The desk at which I'm writing these words is 76.5 cm in height, with a top of 69.5 by 111 cm. (...)

Let us not mention the objects that sit on top of the desk, as they are incidental and interchangeable, with the exception, perhaps, of the Remington typewriter, a 1957 model Travel Writer de Luxe. To this, I'm also attached; it is my means of production. The taxman's no longer interested in it ...».

Here we have to stress the importance of Annemarie Böll. The couple married in 1942, and during the first years after the war, when Böll still was an unknown author, she provided the family's livelihood with her job as a teacher. In the initial, difficult years, she was not only his first reader and critic, she also encouraged him during all stages of his career. Annemarie Böll, who had studied English, translated nearly 200 works of world literature into German, with Heinrich Böll, although credited as co-translator, only playing a minor part in the process.



«All I need in order to write is a quiet room, many, many cigarettes, every two hours a pot of coffee or tea, a large bottle of cologne, and a typewriter.»

From: Conversations with Horst Bienek (1961)

Was Böll an active member of a political party?

Already at the beginnings of his career Böll rejected any kind of cooptation by a political party. In the run-up to the 1965 elections, when other writers asked him to back the Social Democrats, he refused, as he saw no purpose in supporting a party that, he thought, differed only in minor details from the Christian Democrats. He was very interested, however, in the extra-parliamentary opposition that originated in the late 1960s at universities. This movement arose out of protest against the then governing grand coalition (1966–1969), and its rallies were a push towards political and social change. As a writer, Heinrich Böll viewed himself as an «inherent» part of any extra-parliamentary opposition, yet he warned students against violence, as this would discredit

their demands. It was only later, during the 1972 election campaign, that he came out in support of Willy Brand and his «Ostpolitik» (new policy towards Eastern Europe), still, he remained wary of the Social Democrats. Over the following years he continued with his support of new protest movements that found little resonance in the media and were not represented in parliament. Many environmentalist grassroots groups arose and ecology and peace became key topics of political debate. To Heinrich Böll the ideas proposed by the new Green Party were more plausible than those of the other parties, and he came out in support of the Greens starting with the 1979 European elections. Böll, however, never joined the Green Party.



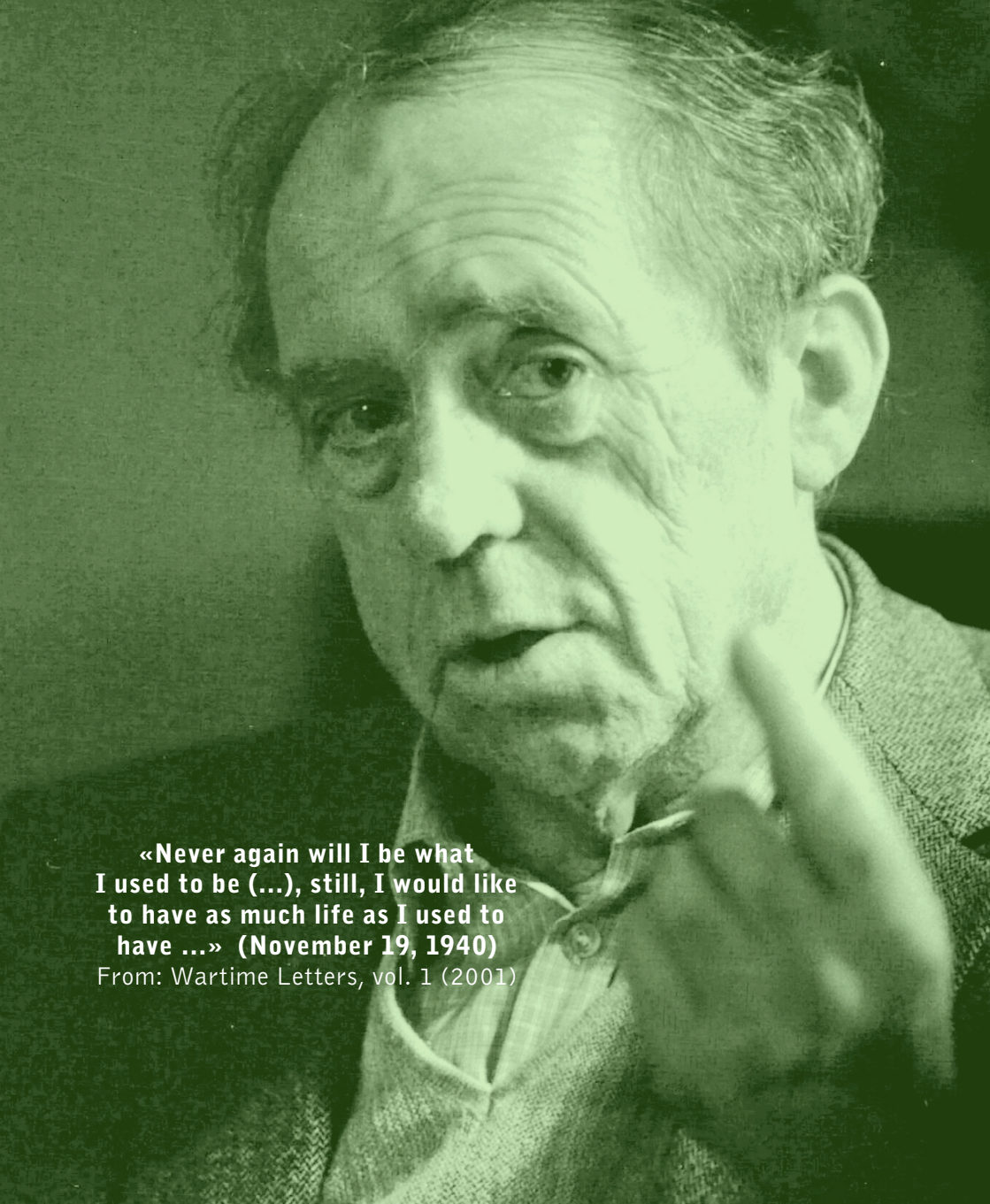
«Law that isn't put to use
will perish; freedom that
isn't put to use will wilt.»

From: Today,
resistance means ... (1983)

How formative was his time as a soldier in WW2?

Heinrich Böll was 15 when the Nazis came to power. At age 21 he was called up and for the whole duration of the war he served, against his will, as a private in the German army. Every single day he wrote letters to his family and to Annemarie, his fiancée and then wife, letters that tell of a young, inexperienced man who had been robbed of his youth, he thought, by the Nazis. He believed in his calling to become a writer and saw that his plans were thwarted by military service. He was not a member of the resistance, and although he went AWOL for a period of time, he returned to his unit because that seemed to be the safer bet for survival. When his time as an American POW ended he was 28 years old – and he began to write anew: about the war, about coming back home, about life in the ruins – meaning the ruined cities as well as the ruined souls, ideas, and values. Publishers rejected Böll's early work, telling him that

readers did not want to hear about ruins but were yearning for a more positive outlook. In his «Affirmation of Rubble Literature» Böll justified his position to try and find «a livable language in a livable country». In his stories he addressed aspects of guilt and how to re-appraise the past – without simply trying to overcome it. He deliberately rejected efforts in politics and society to forget and repress the past. After 1949, when the West German parliament began to pass laws pardoning very many Nazis that had previously been convicted and reinstating officials that had been dismissed by the victorious allies after 1945 for political reasons, he, in his writing, began to appeal against such a political and social restoration. Until the day he died, he reminded his readers in essays and speeches that the Third Reich had been a period when too few had resisted, and he stressed the importance to resist injustices.

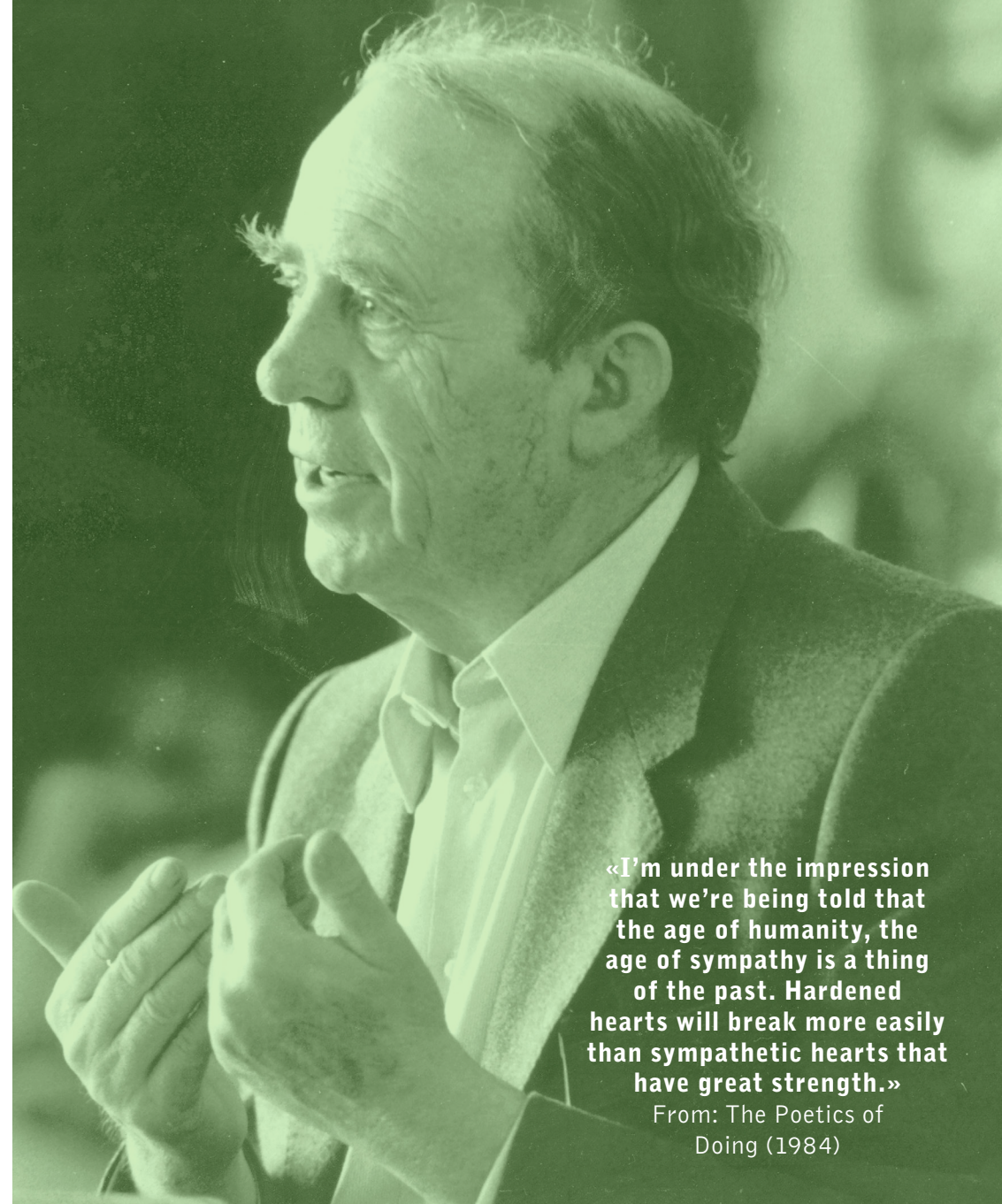


«Never again will I be what I used to be (...), still, I would like to have as much life as I used to have ...» (November 19, 1940)
From: Wartime Letters, vol. 1 (2001)

How important was religion for him?

Heinrich Böll was baptized a Catholic and grew up in a mostly Catholic environment. He was a member of a Catholic youth group and went to mass regularly. At the heart of Böll's Christian religious world view was «the suffering Christ incarnate». Many passages in his early as well as late works refer to the bible, especially the New Testament, as well as to liturgical elements, the meaning of the Eucharist (bread) and – at its very center – the figure of the compassionate human being. Böll pinned his hopes on what he called a «human sacramentality», and this is most pronounced in the novel «Group Portrait with Lady». Despite being

a devout and practicing Catholic, however, Böll remained wary of the Catholic church, its organizations and institutions. His main objection was that the church, rather than defending Christian social values, put all too much emphasis on conserving the power of its institutions and its own social and political clout. An especially sore point for Böll was that the church voiced no objections against rearmament in the 1950s and that many of its priests advocated for the Christian Democrats from the pulpit. Heinrich Böll refused to pay church tax and thus left the church. Still, he lived and died a devout Christian.



«I'm under the impression that we're being told that the age of humanity, the age of sympathy is a thing of the past. Hardened hearts will break more easily than sympathetic hearts that have great strength.»

From: The Poetics of Doing (1984)

Why was Böll dubbed «the conscience of the nation»?

By virtue of his stories and novels, Heinrich Böll became one of the best known German writers from the late 1950s onward. The public began to equate the moral tenets on display in his works with those of the author, viewing him as an exponent of a «different» Germany. For Heinrich Böll civic commitment, although commitment of a questioning kind, was a matter of course, and he thought that intellectuals should act responsibly. Still, he rejected the label «conscience of the nation» outright, instead pointing to parliaments and also churches and the media that, combined and without question, should take on such a role. He didn't want to be taken for granted, nor be seen as a «fixture». While he was willing to «weigh in on issues» he qualified this by stating that «[I] will certainly weigh in and I may even want to be heard, yet all deputizing, which is part of becoming

a fixture» – was something he found perilous. Instead he demanded that everybody should question social and political processes and then draw their own conclusions. It was statements such as these that made the public assign him the role of «textbook intellectual». However, while some saw in him a wary critic, others viewed his opinions as pernicious and unpatriotic. After his death, many obituaries called Böll «a voice of decency» and someone who «incorruptibly and indomitably left his mark». In its obituary, «Spiegel» magazine said that while Böll was «unpompousness and unplatitudinousness personified», and someone who, during his lifetime, would have preferred fewer labels, his image had become that of «the bleeding heart from Cologne» and «conscience of the nation» who, almost as an aside, was also a writer.

«We have not the least inkling
how much credit children
are willing to give us and how
easily this is squandered.»

From: Grandparents
Wanted (1958)



How and why did he champion human rights?

For Heinrich Böll, to be a writer and to be active in politics were two sides of the same medal. Böll wrote hundreds of petitions, appeals, resolutions, etc., and often they had to do with well-known dissidents or authors suffering persecution, but quite a number also addressed the fate of unknown women and men. In his speech «The Poetics of Doing» (1984) Heinrich Böll pointed out that the Greek word that is the source of «poetics» has many meanings and only one of them signifies writing or making up stories. The word's most common meanings, he explained, «have all to do with doing». Here, Böll referred to the activist Rupert Neudeck who, together with Böll, had set up the project «A Ship for Vietnam» to save Vietnamese refugees, the so-called «boat people», from the South-China Sea. In this speech, Heinrich Böll called on people's empathy because, in his eyes, they possess «incredible strength,

great energy, and creative imagination», all of which should be used to combat indifference, resignation, cynicism, and apathy. Böll fought against bondage in East and West alike. He campaigned against censorship, oppression, and persecution in Eastern Europe; in Greece and Portugal, while they were ruled by military juntas; as well as against dictators in South America. This was one of the reasons he became president of PEN International in 1971. His efforts for the PEN International Writers in Prison Committee, one of the greatest achievements of his presidency, focused on campaigning for Eastern European writers and their families who were persecuted and victims of censorship. Wherever publicity could help such victims of persecution, he used his renown and gave interviews, and wrote open letters and resolutions. Many of his activities, however, took place away from the public eye.

«Words can be used to doom a group of fellow citizens, no matter how they are being categorized.»

From: *Language as the Refuge of Freedom* (1959)

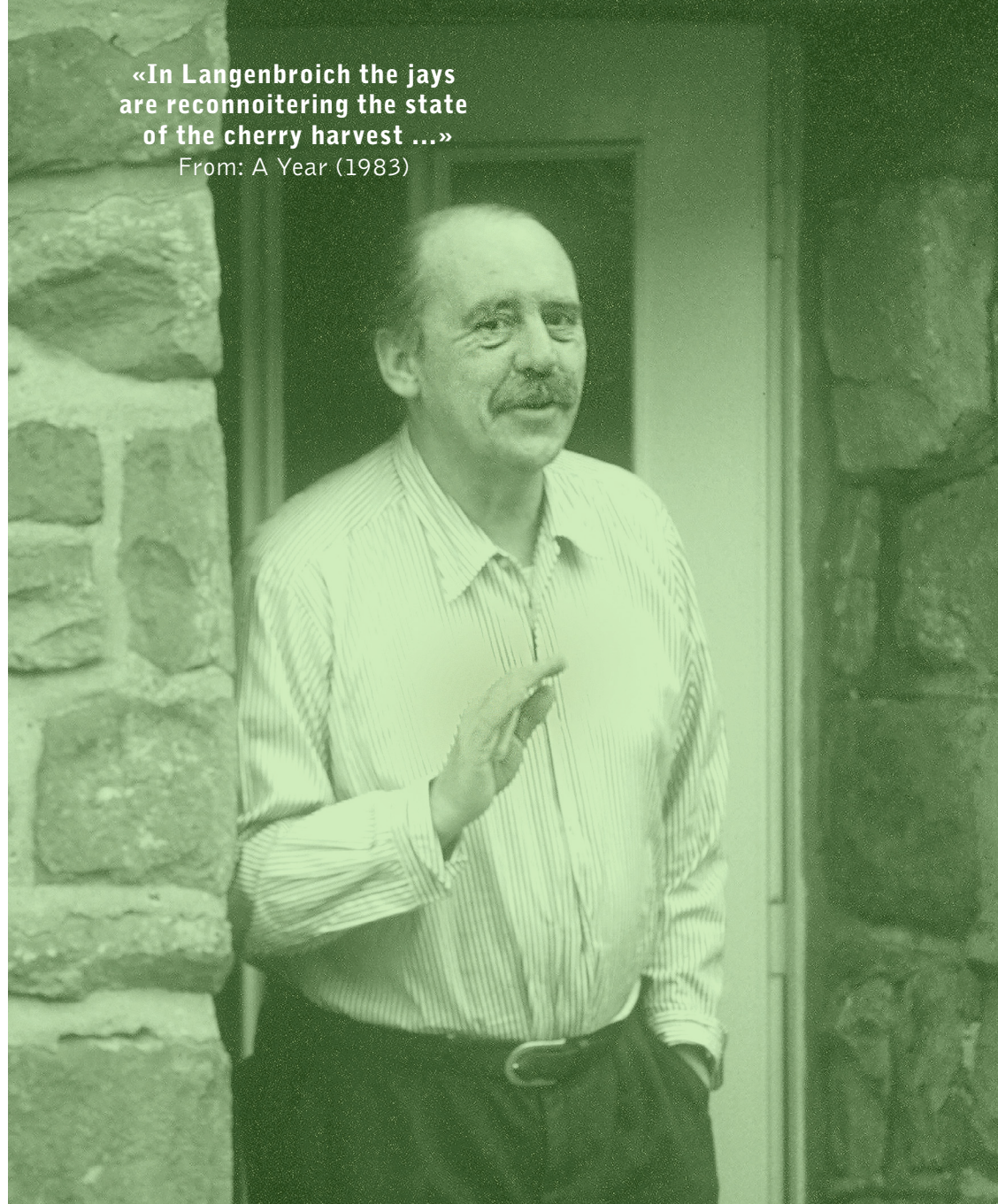
Where did Böll spend his life?

Heinrich Böll was born on December 21, 1917 in the southern part of Cologne's old downtown. As Böll's parents weren't natives of Cologne, Böll himself, despite his Cologne accent, wasn't regarded as a true «hometown boy» according to local custom. Böll thought that smug citizens of Cologne, who, for no good reason, were proud of the accident of having been born in the city, were plainly arrogant. Similarly he disliked the stereotypical way in which Cologne's carnival was displayed on TV or how local slapstick folk theater was used to promote the city. Instead, what he found gripping was the flippancy put on parade during the original street carnival and the liberal public spirit of the city's populace. In such ways, life in Cologne's southern downtown area was formative for the young Heinrich Böll – and so was the Rhine. The large river, the architecture, the people, and life on the narrow streets all became part of his novels and stories, and

it was above all the old Cologne, the Cologne from before the war, as well as the Cologne in ruins, that entered into his works. The rebuilt Cologne, however, he found less livable, as the new city put the car at its center, destroying and cutting apart whole city quarters. Heinrich Böll and his hometown – this was a rather uneasy relationship, a relationship marked by some misunderstandings. He had lived in this city since 1917, and ten times he moved house. For many years he also owned a house in the village of Langenbroich, located in the Eifel hill country. In 1982 he left Cologne for good. His grave site is located in Bornheim, a town between Cologne and Bonn. In 1983 Böll was given the Freedom of the City of Cologne, and the Cologne literature prize, instituted in 1980, has been bearing his name since 1985. After his death, a centrally located square close to the river Rhine was named in his honor.

«In Langenbroich the jays
are reconnoitering the state
of the cherry harvest ...»

From: A Year (1983)



Why was Ireland so important to Böll?

«Irish Journal» is Böll's best-selling book. It was first published in 1957, yet up to the present day people will bring it along when they travel to Ireland. The «Irish Journal» is a semi-documentary travel book. Much of it is based on «Impressions of Ireland», a series of articles Böll had written for the «Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung». Before he wrote the book, Böll had spent many months in Ireland. He chronicled his impressions in 18 carefully composed episodes, and it was only later that he revised them and turned them into a unified book. That his approach was more poetic than journalistic is backed up by the book's motto: «This Ireland exists; yet, whoever travels there and doesn't find it may not claim compensation from the author». The book describes Ireland at a time when it still was one of Western Europe's poorest countries and isolated by its marginal location. The setting of the stories are its backward facilities, the traditional beliefs of the Irish, and the depletion of the country by emigration to Britain and the US. Böll's

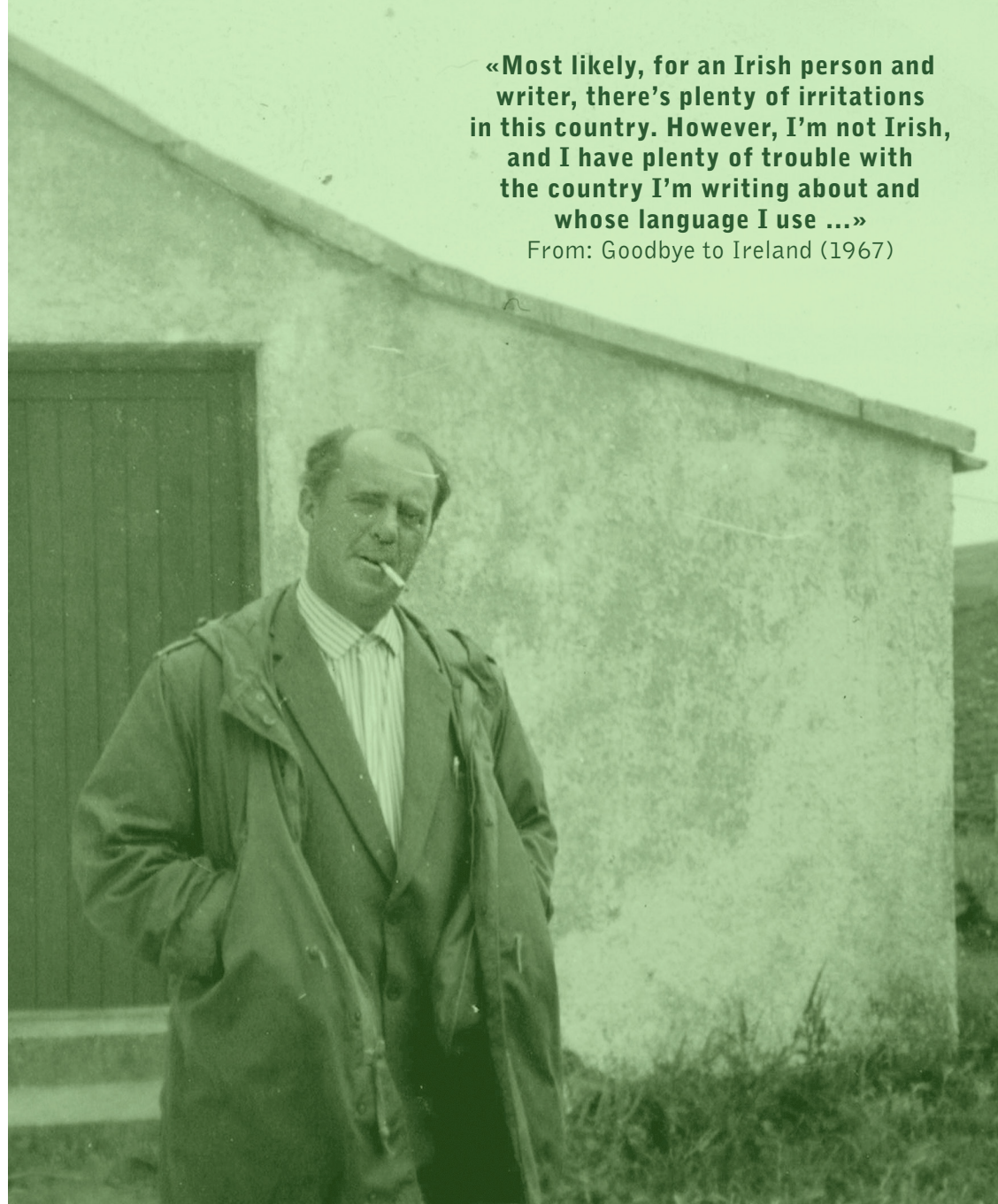
descriptions of personal encounters are sometimes tinged by melancholy, yet the overall depiction of Ireland and the Irish is entirely positive. Heinrich Böll's special relationship with Ireland is also shown by the fact that he and his wife Annemarie translated the works of many Irish authors.

In 1954 Böll traveled to Ireland on his own, after which, starting in 1955, he and his family frequently came to Achill Island (County Mayo) where, initially, they would live in the village of Keel, in a small house with no electricity, phone line, or running water; only now and then would they receive a letter. Then, in 1958, he bought a small cottage on the outskirts of the village of Dugort. He liked the seclusion of the place because it gave him the space and quiet he needed to work, and the absence of everyday German affairs, including politics.

Today, with a scholarship funded by the Irish Heinrich Böll Association, artists may reside and work at the Heinrich Böll Cottage.

«Most likely, for an Irish person and writer, there's plenty of irritations in this country. However, I'm not Irish, and I have plenty of trouble with the country I'm writing about and whose language I use ...»

From: Goodbye to Ireland (1967)

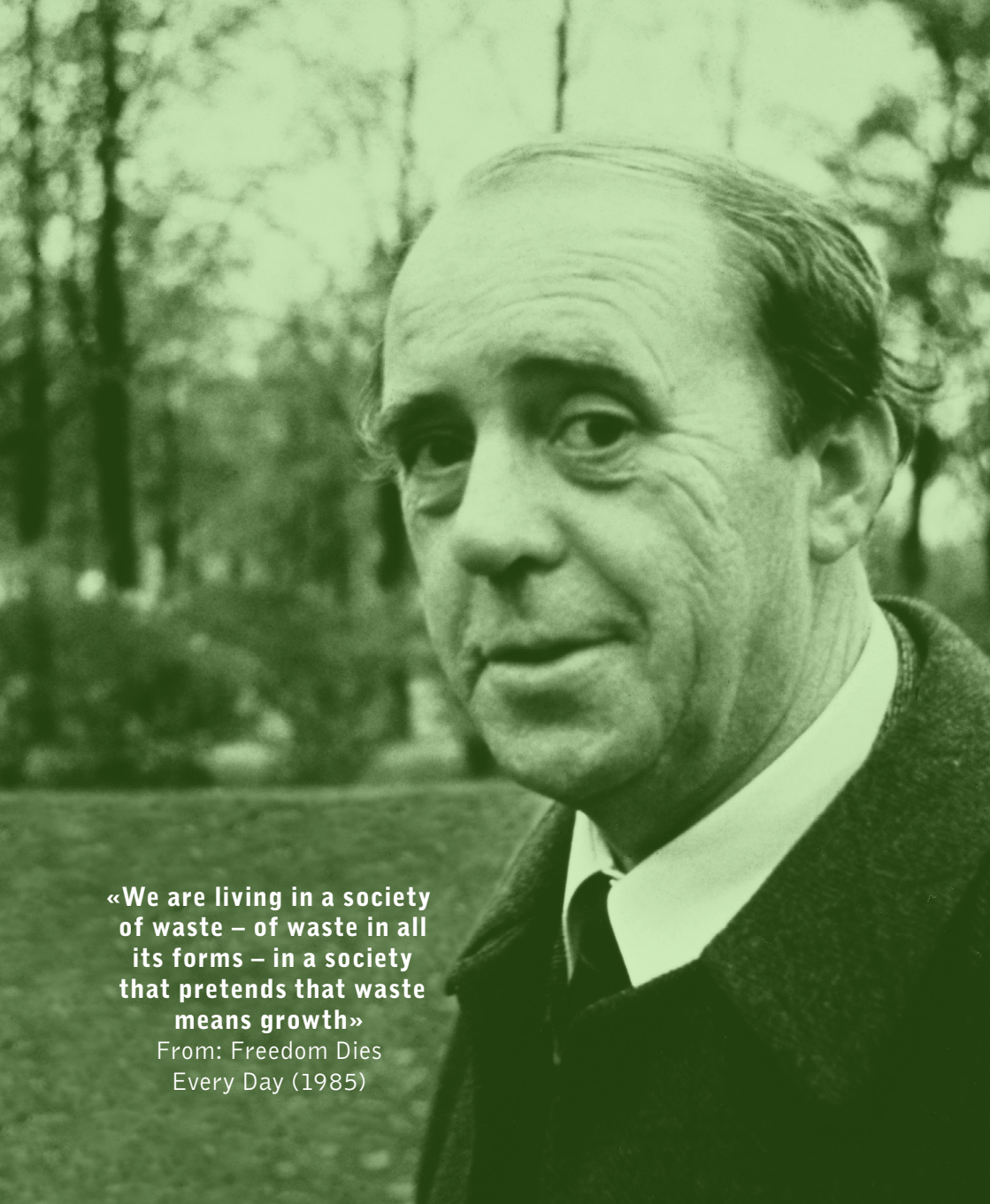


Did Böll address environmental concerns?

In a number of his works, Heinrich Böll wrote about the willful waste of natural resources such as water, air, and soil, as well as of food such as bread. Most of the stories and radio plays Böll wrote in the 1950s contain ironic allusions to aspects of the «Miracle on the Rhine», that is, to the economic boom West Germany experienced during this time. It is above all in his satires that he sent up the contradictions of the period and the resulting absurdities. For example, in his «Anecdote Concerning the Lowering of Productivity» he describes how a tourist on a visit to a fishing village is trying to convince a catnapping fisherman to become more efficient – only to fail entirely. «The Discarder», a satire dealing with free catalogs and packaging waste, strikes us today as more apt than ever before. Böll was concerned that property, wealth, and greed would take on a life of their own and begin to dominate our existence. This was something he targeted again and again. He was wary of the

ideology of growth and described the society he experienced as «a society of waste that pretends that waste means growth». He saw arrogance in many areas stretching from the exploitation of resources to the term «Third World». This he addressed in his 1973 Nobel Lecture, when he explained how the indigenous peoples of the Americas, when confronted with European reason, became helpless onlookers, horrified to see how their land was subjugated to profit and destroyed. «Everything that epitomized their lives, the poetry of water, of wind, of the buffalo and of grass was scorned – and finally, today, we Western, civilized people living in cities that represent the outcome of our total reason (...), finally we are beginning to sense how real the poetry of wind and water is – and what it is that it embodies.»

Böll demanded that humanity preserve its livelihood, and it is this that connected him with the emerging environmental movement of the 1960s and 1970s.



**«We are living in a society
of waste – of waste in all
its forms – in a society
that pretends that waste
means growth»**

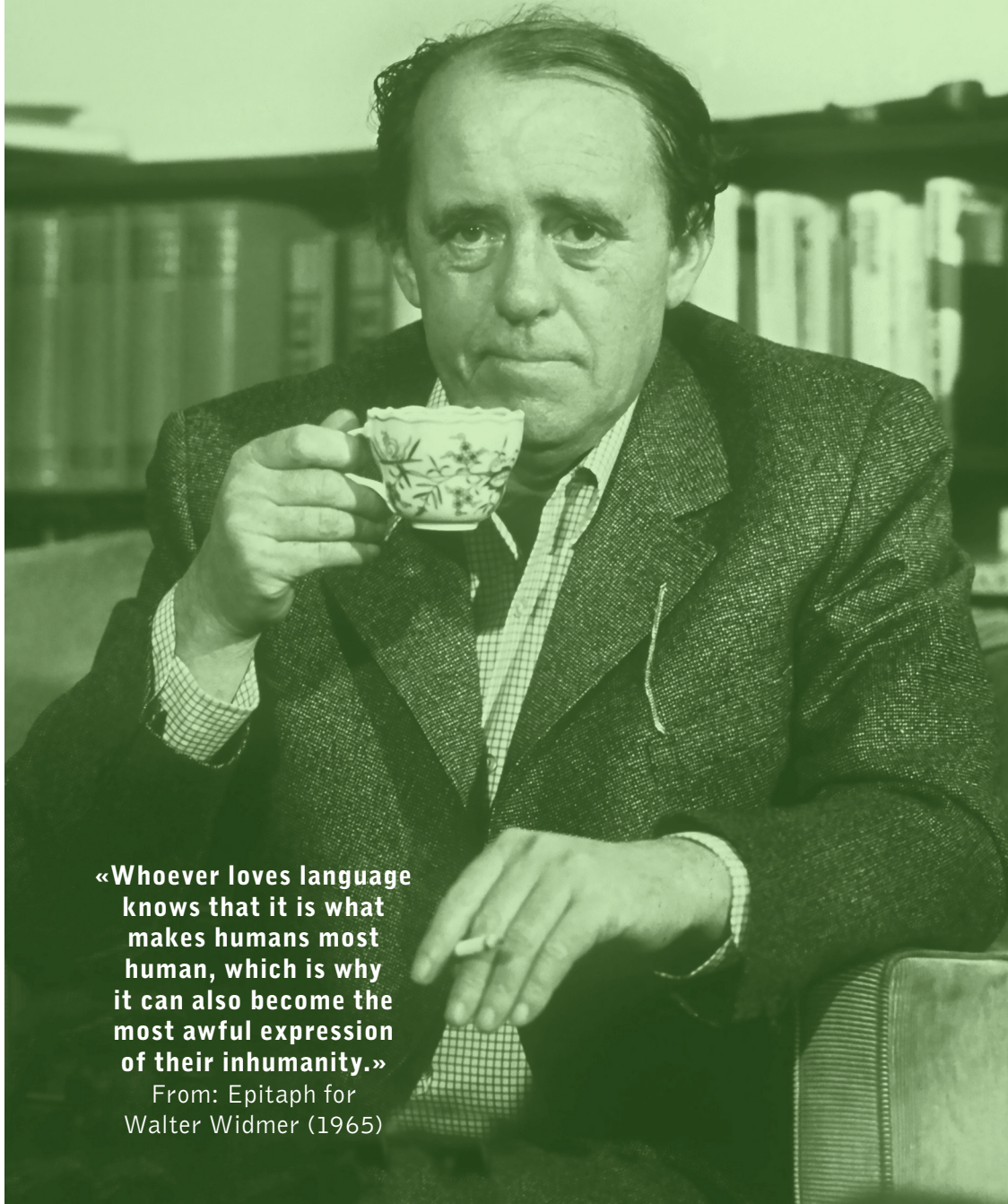
From: Freedom Dies
Every Day (1985)

Why did Böll fight the tabloid «BILD»?

In the 1960s and 1970s, Heinrich Böll saw the biased and lurid reporting practiced by BILD (in conjunction with the power of its publisher, Springer) as a major threat to the freedom of expression and thus to democracy. Accordingly, he supported protests against «BILD» by oppositional students, as well as the call for a boycott of Springer issued by the Gruppe 47 (a group of well-known writers). At the height of the student protests, and following an attempt on the life of student leader Rudi Dutschke, he demanded an official inquiry into the possible responsibility of Springer publishers. A declaration signed by Böll alongside 14 university professors stated: «This political climate has been methodically orchestrated by a press, which purports to be the guardian of the constitution, and which claims to speak in the name of order and the majority of the people, a press, however, that defines order as control of the uneducated masses and as the road towards a new authoritarian nationalism».

Some Springer journalists, on the other hand, viewed the backing of the protests by «leftist intellectuals» as incitement of young people and blamed them for some of the violence that erupted during rallies.

In January 1972, «Spiegel» magazine published an article by Böll, titled «Does Ulrike [Meinhof] Ask for Mercy or Safe Conduct?», in which he severely attacked Springer. Parts of this article were written in an edgy style, providing his enemies with a target, and this led to a months-long campaign by some publishers, as well as Christian Democrats against the author. Böll was defamed as a sympathizer of terrorists and as someone who embraced their acts of violence. These experiences, together with the conduct of «BILD», later formed the basis of the novel «The Lost Honor of Katharina Blum», one of Böll's most successful books.



«Whoever loves language knows that it is what makes humans most human, which is why it can also become the most awful expression of their inhumanity.»

From: Epitaph for
Walter Widmer (1965)

Why should Böll still be read?

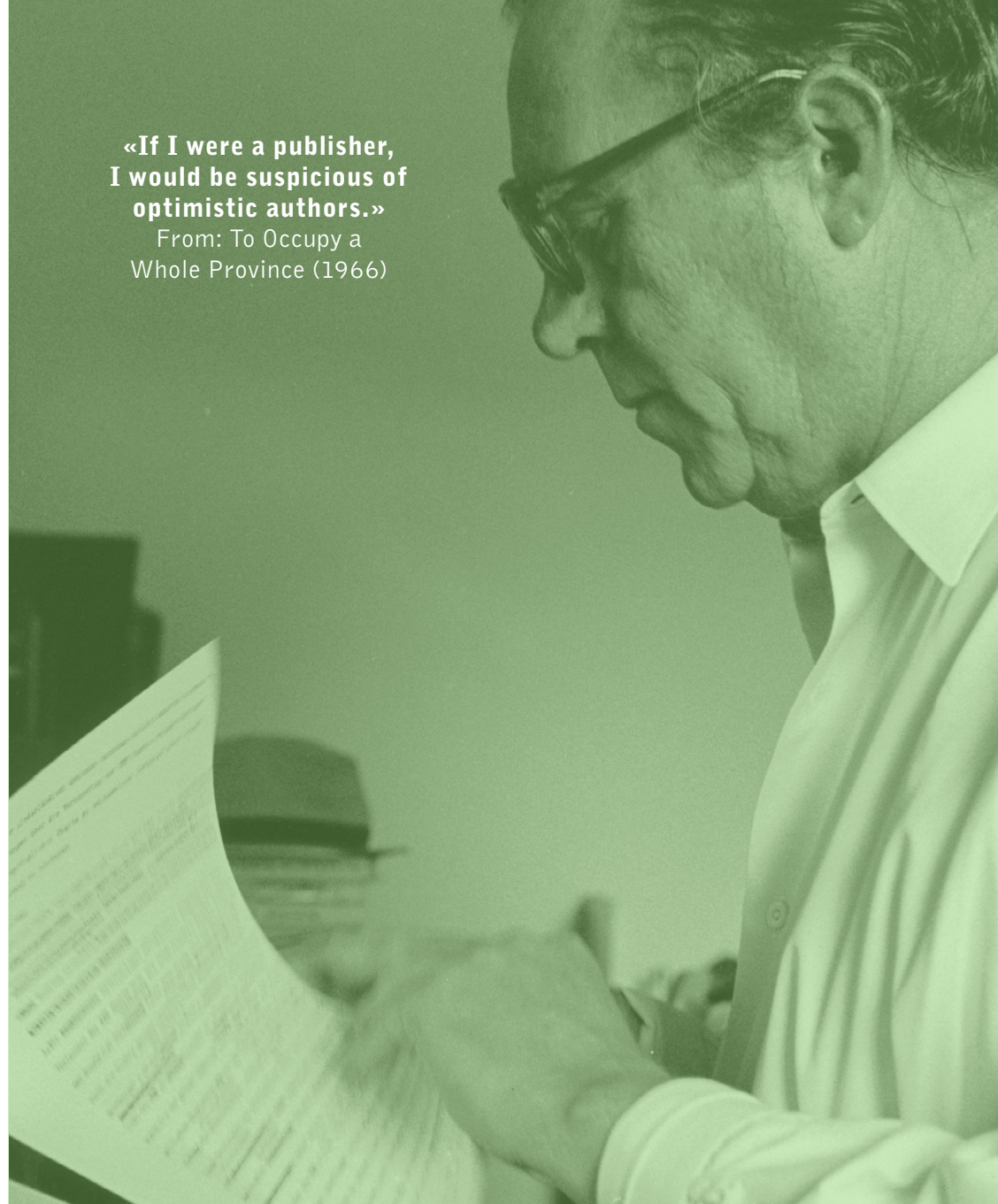
Heinrich Böll was a bestselling author and his works were read in the West and the East, in the South and the North. For many years, his books were studied in school and this continues to the present day. He tackled contemporary issues. As a former soldier in the German army he grappled with war, guilt, and with the mental devastations caused by war. The term «rubble literature», probably meant to be disparaging, was something he embraced. He was always a contemporary, and he wrote for his contemporaries who understood him and felt that he understood them. He once said that he is writing about «neighborhoods, one's home, money and love, religion and meals» – and such subject matter is of course timeless ... which makes him interesting to us today. He created characters shaped by the West Germany of his

time, yet we may still recognize ourselves in their image, in Katharina Blum, for example («The Lost Honor of Katharina Blum») or in Hans Schnier («The Clown»).

He was quite famous, yet he didn't want to be a brand that just delivered what one had paid for. Consequently, he switched subject matter, viewpoints, and genres. We, today, may read Heinrich Böll as a historic author, as somebody speaking to us from a distance. We may enjoy his style, his humor, and also his humanism. We can envision him standing in front of us, lighting up yet another cigarette, pondering. We may miss his moral acuity. We may ask ourselves: «What would Heinrich Böll have said?», yet we will be unable to answer that question, as Böll was no brand.

**«If I were a publisher,
I would be suspicious of
optimistic authors.»**

From: To Occupy a
Whole Province (1966)



Timeline

1917 Heinrich Böll is born on **December 21** in Cologne.

Attends Catholic primary school in Cologne-Raderthal, followed by the humanistic Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gymnasium, also in Cologne, where he passes **1937** the final exam (Abitur), then begins an apprenticeship at a bookstore, which he breaks off after a brief period.

1939 In April Böll enrolls at university. In the fall he is called-up for military service. From **1940** onward he is stationed in numerous locations in France, Poland, Russia, and Hungary, until becoming a POW in **1945**.

1942 Marries teacher Annemarie Cech (1910-2004). The couple has four sons, the first of which, Christoph, dies shortly after birth (in 1945). The other three are Raimund (1947-1982), René (*1948), and Vincent (*1950).

1949 First publishing contract and first book, *The Train Was on Time*. The following year Friedrich Middelhaue publishes a volume of Böll's short stories, titled «Stranger, Bear Word to the Spartans We...»

1951 First invitation to a session of the «Gruppe 47» group of writers that is led by Hans Werner Richter.

1952 Heinrich Böll switches publishers, joining Kiepenheuer & Witsch where, a year later, his novel «And Never Said a Word » appears. First trip to divided Berlin.

1953 Böll joins the German Academy of Language and Literature.

1954 The Böll family moves into their own house in Cologne's Müngersdorf district. The novel «The Unguarded House» appears; first trip to Ireland.

1955 «The Bread of Those Early Years» appears; elected member of the West German PEN Center.

1957 The «Irish Journal» is published.

1958 A scheduled radio broadcast featuring Heinrich Böll's «Letter to a Young Catholic» is canceled at short notice as his criticism of post-war German Catholicism is deemed too severe.

1959 The novel «Billiards at Half-Past Nine» is published.

1962 First trip to the Soviet Union. Publisher Insel brings out the two stories «When the War Broke Out» and «When the War Was Over».

1963 The novel «The Clown» is published.

1964 The story «Absent Without Leave» appears; Böll gives four lectures on poetics at Frankfurt University.

1966 The tale «The End of a Mission» is published.

1968 In August, Böll travels to Prague and there witnesses the invasion of Warsaw Pact troops putting an end to the so-called Prague Spring.

1969 At the inaugural meeting of the Association of German-Language Writers (VS) Böll gives a speech, titled «The End of Humbleness».

1970 Böll is elected President of the West German PEN Center. At the first conference of the writers' association VS, which is attended by Chancellor Willy Brandt, Böll speaks about «The Unity of Loners».

1971 The novel «Group Portrait with Lady» is published. Böll becomes president of PEN International.

1972 Heinrich Böll is awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature. «Spiegel» magazine publishes an article by Böll, titled «Does Ulrike [Meinhof] Ask for Mercy or Safe Conduct?», triggering a months-long campaign against Böll. During a dragnet operation targeting left-wing terrorists Böll's house is searched by police.

1973 The New York Times publishes Böll's «A Plea for Meddling». Alongside 39 Nobel Laureates he cosigns an appeal criticizing the repression of Andrei Sakharov and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn by Soviet authorities.

1974 Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn is deported to West Germany where he initially stays at Böll's house in the Eifel hill country. Publication of «DThe Lost Honor of Katharina Blum, or: how violence develops and where it can lead».

1976 Annemarie and Heinrich Böll leave the Catholic church.

1977 Böll signs an appeal to the hijackers of Hanns Martin Schleyer demanding that they abandon the «murderous bartering of human lives for human lives».

1978 Böll writes a scene for the episodic movie «Germany in Autumn» satirizing the behavior of the media.

1979 Journalist Rupert Neudeck establishes the relief agency «A Ship for Vietnam», which Böll supports. Publication of the novel The Safety Net. In December, he travels to Ecuador where he suffers a sudden angiopathy and has to have surgery on his right leg in a Quito hospital.

1980 Following talks with a Bolivian women's organization Böll requests that the German government ask the United Nations to establish an international commission tasked with investigating the situation in Bolivia following the military coup there.

1981 Publication of the autobiographical «What's to Become of the Boy?». First major peace rally in Bonn with Böll one of the main speakers.

1982 At a press conference in Bonn, Böll voices his protest against the situation in Poland following the military coup. The Böll family moves to Bornheim-Merten.

1983 In the run-up to the general elections Böll comes out in support of the Green Party. In September he participates in a sit-in, blockading US barracks in Mutlangen (southern Germany). The story «The Wound» and other previously unpublished early works appear. The city of Cologne purchases Heinrich Böll's papers.

1985 On **July 16** Heinrich Böll dies at his house in Langenbroich.

1986 With the support of the estate of Heinrich Böll the «Initiative for the Creation of a Heinrich Böll Foundation» is constituted in Cologne; it is the precursor of the present Foundation.

Awards and Honors

1951

Award of the «Gruppe 47»
(for «The Black Sheep»)

1952

René Schickele Prize (honor for
«Where Were You, Adam?»)

1953

Story Award of South German radio;
Literature Prize of the Association of
German Critics; award of the Culture
Initiative at the German Association
of Industry; member of the German
Academy of Language and Literature

1955

French Publishers Award («Tribune de
Paris») (for «The Unguarded House»
as best foreign novel of the year)

1958

Awarded the Eduard von der Heydt Prize
by the city of Wuppertal and the Prize
of the Bavarian Academy of the Arts

1959

Art Award of the state of North-
Rhine-Westphalia; Literature
Prize of the city of Cologne; member
of the Academy of Sciences in Mainz

1960

Charles Veillon Award (France)
(for «Billiards at Half-Past Nine»)

1965

Premio d'Isola d'Elba (Italy) (for
«The Clown»); honorary member of
the Association of German Translators

1966

Premio Calabria (Italy)

1967

Georg Büchner Prize of the German
Academy of Language and Literature;
1. prize of the International Humorous
Short Story Contest «Aleko» (Bulgaria)

1970

Elected President of West German
PEN Center (served until 1972)

1971

Elected President of PEN
International (served until 1973)

1972

Nobel Prize in Literature

1973

Honorary doctorate of Trinity
College, Dublin; the University
of Aston, Birmingham; and Brunel
University, Uxbridge

1974

Awarded the Carl von Ossietzky Medal
by the Human Rights League, Berlin;
honorary member of the American
Academy of Arts and Letters, New York

1980

Premio Latina (Italy)

1982

Honorary professor of the state
of North Rhine-Westphalia;
Freedom of the City of Cologne

1984

Designated Commandeur of the
«Ordre des Arts et des Lettres»
by French Minister of Culture Jack
Lang; Jens Bjerneboe Prize of the
Odin-Teatret (Denmark). Heinrich
Böll donates the prize money of
100,000 Danish crowns to the
«Deutsche Komitee Notärzte»

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Page 21: Sven Simon/Imago

Page 23: Erbegemeinschaft

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Heinrich Böll: Werke. Kölner Ausgabe (KA). 27 volumes. Ed. by Árpád Bernáth, Hans Joachim Bernhard, Robert C. Conard, Frank Finlay, James H. Reid, Ralf Schnell, and Jochen Schubert. Cologne, Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 2001-2010

Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung (Ed.): Die Vernunft der Poesie. Heinrich Böll und der Literatur-Nobelpreis 1972, Berlin 2022

Jochen Schubert: Heinrich Böll. Biographie, Stuttgart, Theiss 2017

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Schumannstr. 8, 10117 Berlin
info@boell.de, www.boell.de, phone +1-(0)30-28534-0

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**«My premise is that language,
love, and fellowship are what
make humans human ...»**

Heinrich Böll, Frankfurt

Lectures, 1964

 **HEINRICH BÖLL STIFTUNG**