SELF-JUSTIFICATION THROUGH WRITING

by

MARLENE ADELINE SCHIWY

B.A., The University of British Columbia, 1978

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
M.A.

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

Department of Comparative Literature

We accept this thesis as conforming
to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

September, 1983

© Marlene Adeline Schiwy, 1983
In presenting this thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirements for an advanced degree at the University of British Columbia, I agree that the Library shall make it freely available for reference and study. I further agree that permission for extensive copying of this thesis for scholarly purposes may be granted by the head of my department or by his or her representatives. It is understood that copying or publication of this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Department of **Comparative literature**

The University of British Columbia
1956 Main Mall
Vancouver, Canada
V6T 1Y3

Date **October 1, 1983**
ABSTRACT

The idea that the writer practices his/her profession in part to fulfill a responsibility and to absolve himself of guilt is not unique to contemporary literature. From Rousseau's *Confessions*, to Pablo Neruda's *Confieso que he vivido*, literally "I confess that I lived", self-justification has been a central concern of the writer who attempts an autobiographical or quasi-autobiographical literary project.

Questions of responsibility, guilt, and justice however, may be a particularly unavoidable part of the post-War heritage of Central European writers; specifically those who lived in Germany during the War, and those who for one reason or another, were taken prisoners by the German forces.

After the War ended, the establishment of socialist governments ostensibly overshadowed all other matters in the newly-created German Democratic Republic and in Czechoslovakia; including the task of examining the past. Innumerable moral questions were left untouched and unanswered, particularly those revolving around the Holocaust.

For many years the general trend especially among official circles, seems to have been to consider the past overcome, or "bewältigt", and writers were encouraged to produce positive portrayals of life in the new socialist society, and to adhere to the officially-proscribed tenets of Socialist realism.

Recently however, and particularly in the last decade or two, an increasing number of "middle-generation" writers - those who lived through the War as young children but were too young for active participation - have turned to the dramatic and shattering events of their childhoods in an attempt to understand their present lives.
What is particularly interesting is the fact that they have often chosen to portray the events of their early years in the form of novels, rather than autobiographies. Christa Wolf and Ivan Klima have both indicated clearly - in an inscription and a letter to his readers, respectively - that it would be a grave error (on the part of the reader) to interpret Kindheitsmuster and Der Gnadenrichter only as the story of a single individual in a specific historical and national setting. Wolf and Klima have written the story of their childhoods and ensuing years, and have attempted to analyze its lasting influence on their present lives, creating narrator/protagonists whose personalities and lives bear unmistakeable affinities with their own.

Both Wolf and Klima have found it impossible to tell their stories in a single long, uninterrupted narrative, and have chosen, in one form or another, to break their narratives. Christa Wolf incorporates the actual process of writing Kindheitsmuster in hers and Ivan Klima divides his story into various sub-narratives. In both cases, the structure of the novels reflects the difficulties inherent in searching out the past, in challenging memory, and in attempting to tell the truth.

This paper attempts a parallel study of the autobiographical novels of two "middle-generation" writers; Christa Wolf's Kindheitsmuster and Ivan Klima's Der Gnadenrichter; with regard to their general design, their formal qualities, and their most significant thematic concerns.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedication</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preface</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Footnotes</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Footnotes</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter One</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sich - Frei - Schreiben:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme and Process in Christa Wolf's <em>Kindheitsmuster</em></td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Footnotes</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Two</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Impossibility of Justice:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ivan Klima's <em>Der Gnadenrichter</em></td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Footnotes</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Three</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aspiration, Memory, and Obstruction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in <em>Kindheitsmuster</em> and <em>Der Gnadenrichter</em></td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Footnotes</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epilogue</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I would like to express my appreciation for financial support extended to me by the University of British Columbia in the form of a University Graduate Fellowship 1980-81, 1981-82, and a Summer Fellowship in 1983.
I would like to dedicate this thesis to

Marketa Goetz-Stankiewicz

whose teaching inspired it, and whose enthusiasm and steadfastness sustained the writing of it.
Einmal müsste sie geschrieben werden, die sonderbare, sprunghafte Lesegeschichte meiner Generation...

Christa Wolf, 1968
Lesen und Schreiben

Kannst du in dieser Zeit etwas Grösseres fertigbringen, als mit dem zu bestehen, was du in dir trägst?

Ivan Klima, 1976
Der Gnadenrichter

Once having taken up "the word" there is no evasion of it afterward: the writer is not a dispassionate judge of his fellow countrymen and contemporaries, but an accomplice in all the evils wrought in his homeland or by his own people.

Alexander Solzhenitsyn, 1972
Nobel Prize Speech
Christa Wolf of the German Democratic Republic, and Ivan Klima of Czechoslovakia, have written in a variety of genres during the several decades of their literary careers. But both *Kindheitsmuster* for Wolf, and *Der Gnadenrichter* for Klima, are unique literary undertakings.

Both Wolf and Klima have invented distinctly autobiographical narrators/protagonists who tell the stories of their respective childhoods in Germany and Czechoslovakia during and after the War, which was to become the dominant reference point of their lives. The final products reveal both striking parallels and equally, significant differences.

There is a major difference to my mind, in the two writers' basic literary predilection. Christa Wolf and Ivan Klima approach their common material with widely-different backgrounds, and styles, of writing.

Christa Wolf is, it seems, much more the poet. Many passages of *Kindheitsmuster* read like prose poetry; rich with suggestive metaphor, poetic images, allusions, and often achieving a powerful effect by the use of understatement. Wolf states that prose should try to be unfilmable; that it should explore the inner recesses of thought and memory which the camera cannot follow. She begins with the tiniest possible segment of consciousness in the individual and moves out, testing her observations upon society and the world in general.

That Ivan Klima is above all a dramatist is, I believe, apparent in *Der Gnadenrichter*. His writing is visually evocative and inspires one to
think in terms of actions and scene. In contrast to Wolf, he begins with universal dimensions and gradually works inward, to a single nation, and finally to a single individual. Adam Kindl, wandering in the hills of Britain, ponders:

Ist nicht alles, was ich bin, nur das bedrückende Zusammenspiel von Zufällen, die dazu geführt haben, dass ich nun in einem unbekannten Berg ersteige und über mich nachdenke, da ich endlich Zeit und Gelegenheit habe, über mich selbst nachzudenken.

He concludes:

Der Mensch kann sich von seinem Leben nicht lösen. Seine Erlebnisse, Irrtümer, Erkenntnisse, die Menschen, die er einmal geliebt oder gehasst hat, das alles bleibt in ihm und begleitet ihn bis zu seinem Tode.

For Klima's narrator, this period of reflection and self-scrutiny is an exception, unusual to his normal routine. For Wolf's narrator, it is the basis of her entire account. The things she discovers about herself and her past are examined with regard to their relevance to the larger social group.

It is the integrity and the moral seriousness of these two writers that I find remarkable and compelling in their work; the refusal of art for art's sake, the insistence upon clarity, and a particular luminous quality of their prose. Ivan Klíma writes traditional prose and Christa Wolf writes her own experimental prose: but both write prose that seeks to communicate meaning rather than obscure it or deny its existence.

Perhaps it is an act of good faith when a writer today presumes to communicate something that he/she believes to be of vital importance. Kindheitsmuster and Der Gnadenrichter are not only literary texts. They are books which illuminate our lives.
Uwe Johnson, a GDR contemporary of Christa Wolf and Ivan Klima, now living in the West (and whose work has been compared with Wolf's) speaks about various literary consequences that have arisen from the subject of post-War Germany; in particular, how this has affected the narrator's position.

He states:

Where does the author stand in his text? Attitudes of omniscience are suspect.... The author ought to admit that he invented what he tells, that his information is incomplete and imprecise.... He can, for instance, make this admission by stressing the difficult quest for truth, by comparing or relating his own view of what has happened to that of one of his characters, by omitting what he cannot know, by not giving out as pure art what is yet another quest for truth.2

In their literary texts and in the figures of their respective narrators, Wolf and Klima have made the "difficult quest for truth" the central concern of Kindheitsmuster and Der Gnadenrichter.

The narrator in Kindheitsmuster discovers as she begins to write:

...dass nicht ein schnell zu machendes Ergebnis zu erwarten war, sondern eine lange Zeit von Arbeit und Zweifel. Dass es nicht beim nächsten Buch Ernst wurde, sondern bei diesem.3

Perhaps the nature of their contents have determined that Kindheitsmuster and Der Gnadenrichter would be written only a generation after the shattering events of the War. And perhaps more fully and more eloquently than in their earlier works, Christa Wolf and Ivan Klima have stated here, their unequivocal "yes and no".
FOOTNOTES


INTRODUCTION

In his 1980 Nobel Lecture, Czesław Miłosz tells that in a favourite book from his childhood, *Wonderful Adventures of Nils*, the hero has a double role:

He is the one who flies above the earth and looks at it *from above* but at the same time sees it in every detail. (Miłosz' emphasis.)

Miłosz makes of this double vision a metaphor of the poet's vocation - "to see and to describe" - and defines the role of the Poet as Seer, threefold: "to have before ones eyes"; "to preserve in memory"; and "to reconstruct in imagination."¹

Coming from much the same part of Europe as two other writers - Christa Wolf and Ivan Klima - the words of Miłosz describe with more than poetic significance, the task which they have undertaken in their novels; *Kindheitsmuster* (1976), and *Der Gnadenrichter*, (1979).

"To have before one's eyes" suggests both temporal and spatial immediacy. The narrators in both *Kindheitsmuster* and *Der Gnadenrichter* engage in an attempt to understand their present lives by uncovering the labyrinthine structure of the past. Wolf's narrator in particular, is concerned with standing upon "this little platform of present time" in order to "wrest the past from fictions and legends."² After a time lapse of approximately thirty years (1945-1972), she tests her powers of acute observation and memory, as
she aspires to "see the past". It is precisely a forty-eight hour period of re-seeing the physical landscape of her childhood - the visit to Grozow Wielkopolski, formerly Landsberg in 1971 - that prompts the author/narrator to begin her odyssey through time and memory, and to produce this, her most ambitious and complex literary work.

To increase her proximity to her material, Wolf's narrator "sees" the past in the present tense, as if the story were a film or a reel of pictures unfolding before her own and the reader's eyes. Nuances of speech, snatches of conversation, fragments of radio broadcasts, and evocations of glances that belie the spoken word - all testify to the author/narrator's belief that: "Das Vergangehe ist nicht tot: es ist nicht einmal vergangen."³

In Klima's Der Gnadenrichter too, we have a sense of the central character, Adam Kindl's life unfolding along with the narrative, and of his reactions to the retrospective sight of his own life. The substratum depths of the past are brought to light in a secondary narrative, seen presumably, through the eyes of Kindl, the protagonist, who tells it nevertheless from the level of present time. He does not, like Wolf's narrator, re-enter the past: however, he is near enough to have immediate and reliable access. He can bear witness, yet retain a perspective not possible during the events themselves.

"To preserve in memory" could mean both to tell oneself one's past in order not to lose it; and to carry the present into the future by means of writing it down. That which is preserved in the memories of Wolf's and Klima's narrators is traumatic, grave, and volatile experience. The act of remembering becomes a duty and an active process. The dilemma of how and what to remember
is complicated by the counter-impulse to forget; especially that which is too painful to be re-born, even before the mind's eye.

Christa Wolf's narrator is jolted by her fourteen-year old daughter's ignorance of who Khrushchev was:

Ein nicht gelinder Schrecken fuhr dir in die Glieder, und es wurde dir klar, dass gewisse Pflichten keinen Aufschub mehr dulden, unter ihnen die Pflicht, anzudeuten, was mit uns geschehen ist.⁴

To preserve in memory, out of a sense of urgency rather than inclination, in order to give account of what has happened to them, is a central concern of Wolf's anonymous narrator and Klima's Adam Kindl.

In Der Gnadenrichter, author and protagonist/narrator both "reconstruct in imagination"; Miłosz' third variant of the Poet's way of Seeing. The central narrative - Adam Kindl's life as judge - and the secondary narrative - Kindl's account of his life from childhood to the present, told in the first person - variously require the powers of imagination to vitalize and give substance to linear and chronological biographical data.

All of Nelly's story in Kindheitsmuster is, in one sense, a reconstruction in imagination. The narrator determines not to invent what she cannot remember, neither for reasons of comfort or aesthetics: "Doch bleibt es dabei, dass Erfindungen ausscheiden und die Erinnerung und Erinnerungen, die Erinnerung an Phantasien nur als Informationen aus zweiter Hand verwendet werden können, als Spiegelungen, nicht als Realität."⁵ Where the prodding of memory provokes half-buried images, where innocuous words and phrases arouse sensations of fear and horror, the narrator does not provide the master key to interpretation. She attempts rather to trace the voices where she can, and where she cannot, to live with a cacophony of residual murmurs.
Christa Wolf, born 1929 in Landsberg, and Ivan Klima, born in Prague, 1931, have led different and yet not totally dissimilar lives. Several important parallels stand out.

Both have shared great hopes that the creation of the German Democratic Republic and the new Communist government in Czechoslovakia after the war, would usher in a period of humane Socialism wherein human beings could best realize their potential.

Christa Wolf was editor of the journal, Neuen Deutschen Literatur (1958-1959) as well as a journal for young people, Neues Leben (1953-1959). She began publishing shorter works of her own, beginning with Moskauer Novelle in 1961, and Der Geteilte Himmel, 1963, often regarded as a pivotal text in the breaking away from the proscribed tenets of Socialist Realism, laid out by the Soviet League of authors in Moscow, 1934.

Wolf has twice spent a year in the USA; as Writer-in-Residence at Oberlin College in Ohio, 1974, and as Distinguished Visiting Professor at Ohio State University at Columbus, this Spring, 1983. She has received at least half a dozen literary awards over the years, including the Büchner Prize in 1980. W.T. Jones suggests: "the right to travel in the West is understandably one of the most sought-after privileges in the GDR."

What is perplexing is the lack of any identifiable criterion to explain why one writer is in favour, while another is not. Either there is no Kulturpolitik or there is a different one for each writer and artist....

Ivan Klima taught Philosophy and Literature and was a staunch member of the Communist Party in Czechoslovakia. He was dismissed from his academic post following the Russian intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968, and has
since been essentially a non-person in his own country. His name, along with many of his colleagues' and co-signers of Charter 77, has been stricken from official records and his books have been removed from the libraries and bookstores of Prague.

Were he to be accorded the privilege of recognition at all by the authorities in Prague, it might be as a "dissident", which Václav Havel explains at length in his study, Versuch, in der Wahrheit zu Leben, is a label affixed to certain individuals that they might not even be aware of. Havel states: "Es ist ursprünglich und vor allem eine bestimmte existentielle Einstellung."7 In the aftermath of the creation of Charter 77, the Human Rights movement and document issued in January of 1977, Havel makes the statement (January 25, 1979), that: "We had not decided to be "dissidents"...but had simply done certain things which we had to do or which seemed to us to be proper." He defines the "dissident writers" as:

Schriftsteller, die so schreiben, wie sie wollen, ohne Rücksicht auf die Zensur und auf die offiziellen Ansprüche, und die dann ihre Werke - wenn die offiziellen Verlage sie ablehnen - im "Samisdat" verbreiten. 8

Havel, a self-defined dissident writer himself, was one of the editors of one of the underground editions in Czechoslovakia, the Edice Expedice, which has published among others, the works of Ivan Klima. Other than that, Klima's work has been published by Edice Petlice, the major Samizdat-style edition in Czechoslovakia.

H. Gordon Skilling describes the Petlice editions in his full-length study, Charter 77 and Human Rights in Czechoslovakia, 1981:

These were typewritten, with carbon copies, and bound, sometimes with simple cardboard covers, occasionally with cloth binding and with illustrations and photographs. A limited number of authorised copies was produced, each
signed by the author and with a note on the title page expressly forbidding further duplication....The readership was variously estimated at several hundred or even several thousand, but cannot be accurately determined. 9

Similarly, Jiří Lederer, himself a black-listed journalist who stood trial on account of his book; Tschechische Gespräche, 1979, describes Edice Petlice as: "eine maschinengeschriebenen Publikationsreihe, die seit mehreren Jahren besteht....Man kann sagen, dass jeder Band einige hundert Leser erreicht." 10

I include this basic biographical information in order to illustrate just how different the reception of Wolf's and Klima's work has been. Their current situations in their respective homelands accounts perhaps for some of the distinct characteristics of their writing.

Christa Wolf has received increasing attention and recognition by readers, critics, and politicians alike, both inside and outside of the German Democratic Republic. Her work, especially Nachdenken über Christa T., 1968, and Kindheitsmuster, 1976, has sparked enormous critical controversy and dispute, especially with regards to her implicit criticism, in Nachdenken, of the failure of the political and social system in East Germany to allow for individual growth and expression. Her work has been praised and condemned on both sides of the Border. Marie-Luise Linn states that in West Germany, the consensus of critics is that: "die Autorin habe sich herrschenden Tabus untergeordnet." 11 Norbert Schachtsiek-Freitag comments that the main criticisms levelled at Kindheitsmuster in the German Democratic Republic were: "ein gewisser Zug zu falschem Verallgemeinern, zu unhistorischem Verkürzen, zu fragwürdigem Analogisieren"; and "vom Standpunkt subjektiven Leiden beurteilt, Statt den richtigen ideologischen Standpunkt der revolutionären Klasse einzunehmen." 12

Ivan Klima's situation in Czechoslovakia is very different from
Christa Wolf's. Although he too spent a year, in 1969, as Visiting Professor at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, he is bound to have been aware that should he leave the country, his citizenship like that of Milan Kundera, would be revoked, and he would not be allowed to return. He writes therefore, virtually without readership or critical response. And ironically, while there is no official recognition of his writing activity, like Adam Kindl in Der Gnadenrichter, he can never be sure that his actions are not under surveillance.

Klima may be one of those whose work has suffered most under the prevailing conditions of the "dissident writer" in Czechoslovakia. As one who seems to prefer a low public profile, his work has not received the same public attention as that of Václav Havel, playwright and former Spokesman of Charter 77; he has not enjoyed the same popular success on Broadway as Pavel Kohout; his decision to remain in Czechoslovakia has guaranteed that he should never enjoy the freedom of movement that Josef Skvorecky enjoys in Toronto, or Milan Kundera, in Paris.

Miłosz suggests in The Captive Mind:

The objective conditions necessary to the realization of a work of art are, as we know, a highly complex phenomenon, involving one's public, the possibility of contact with it, the general atmosphere, and above all freedom from involuntary subjective control.\(^{13}\)

It is obvious that what Ivan Klima seems to be lacking most is the sense of a readership; the knowledge that a certain population receives and reads his work in the original; for it is ironic that after deciding to stay in Czechoslovakia in order to preserve his ties with the language, that his work is published abroad in translation before the original is published:
From 1970 he has been under a complete ban in Czechoslovakia and only some of his new stories, novels and plays could be obtained in translations published in Western Europe, particularly in Germany.\textsuperscript{14}

\textit{Der Gnadenrichter}, which Klima completed in 1976, was published in German translation in Luzern in 1979, and will be available in the original Czech only late in 1983 or 1984; published by Sixty-Eight Publishers in Toronto. Perhaps not surprisingly, there is virtually a complete lack of published critical response to Klima's major novel.\textsuperscript{15}

The indirect criticisms aimed at Ivan Klima and several colleagues in their own country - include the label of "bourgeois intellectuals"; "alien to their own land"; defending a "pure" or "classless" democracy; and of adopting "a general human" in place of "a class approach".\textsuperscript{16}

The only critical review available to me, of \textit{Der Gnadenrichter}, is published in the Czechoslovakian emigre journal, \textit{Svedectvi} by I.K., an anonymous Prague critic, who shares, curiously, the author's initials. He criticizes Klima for lacking a balanced philosophy of history and for portraying only the ignoble side of Czech history, basing his argument on what he calls actual facts which he himself experienced. He suggests that Adam Kindl notices only the evil, and blindfolds his eyes to the alternatives that were available during those years after the War, and to certain connections between his father's and his own generation, which he does not want to acknowledge. Adam Kindl, I.K. suggests, lives everything second-hand.\textsuperscript{17}

Miłosz comments that in a totalitarian state:

One of the most ominous reproaches leveled against writers is the suspicion that their verses, play, or novels contain a "metaphysical residue."\textsuperscript{18}
existing socio-political order does not warrant the people's trust nor meet its needs, nor provide means of fulfilling their need for ethical and intellectual norms, then Klima is indeed guilty.19

Kindheitsmuster and Der Gnadenrichter can both be regarded as pinnacles of the authors' literary production to date. The novels are 476 and 671 pages in length, respectively. The scope of the material; the time span involved - thirty years in Klima's, forty in Wolf's; the complexity of their narrative structures, and even the period of time involved in the writing of the books - surpass those of both authors' previously published works. Both novels were begun in 1972. Wolf finished writing Kindheitsmuster in 1975, while Klima completed Der Gnadenrichter in 1976.

Where earlier works of both authors have dealt with recurring specific themes, Kindheitsmuster and Der Gnadenrichter have broader designs. Each portrays not an isolated crisis in the life of an individual or the absurdity and falsity of a particular social institution, but as accurately, and truthfully as possible, the full story of an individual life, in a concrete social context.

The stories are not those of two average lives, for the individuals in question both belong to that generation that spent its adolescence during the Second World War. Both Adam Kindl and Christa Wolf's Nelly, have witnessed the movement of their childhood, as Wolf's narrator expresses it; "in den Schatten der Öfen von Auschwitz"; and have eternal memories of a nightmarish landscape of cruelty, suffering, starvation, and death; or in the words of the poet, Nelly Sachs; they remember a "Landschaft aus Schreien".20

"Die Toten gehörten in jener Zeit zu meinem Alltagsleben," Adam Kindl recalls of his childhood.21 That Klima's protagonist should bear lasting scars from those early years is not surprising. Three and a half of those
years, exactly 1,252 days, he remembers precisely, were spent in Theresienstadt, with his mother and younger brother, as well as various friends and relatives. Ostensibly their internment was on grounds of paternal Jewish ancestry although this is never explicitly stated in the novel. (His mother's side of the family, we learn, converted to Judaism from Christianity three hundred years earlier, in the attempt to avoid persecution.) The older Adam recalls the time of his imprisonment:

Ich ahnte damals nicht, dass der Krieg für mich wie für viele andere niemals beendet sein würde. Ich werde ihn in mir tragen, selbst wenn ich ihn vergessen sollte, auch wenn ich nicht mehr von ihm träume.

What is more surprising, perhaps, is the extent of the suffering borne by Nelly Jordan in Wolf's Kindheitsmuster. Living in Landsberg, now a part of Poland, Nelly was ten years old when the War broke out and her father was conscripted into the German Army, and sixteen when she heard the words: "Hitler ist tot." The narrator states:

Entschieden aber war noch lange nicht, ob sie durch Melancholie - die Trauer um ihren schlimmsten Feind - sich selbst zerstören oder ob es ihr gelingen würde, die verkümmerte Fähigkeit, Erfahrungen zutreffend zu deuten, zu entwickeln und zu überleben. Lange Zeit, jahrelang, sollte der Kampf unentschieden hin und her gehen - auch dann noch, als sie Selbst ihn längst und eindeutig zu ihren Gunsten für entschieden hielt. (Wie sind wir so geworden, wie wir heute sind?)

Christa Wolf's Nelly, no less than Ivan Klima's Adam Kindl, is to carry the war and the upheavals connected with it, inside her ever after. Both, as adults, note the presence of an uncertainty and insecurity, unattached to any specific event or cause, that haunts their lives long after the War is over and their lives resume relatively normal proportions, Kindl states: "Ich weiss nicht, ob dieses Gefühl der Unsicherheit dem tatsächlichen Stand der
Dinge entspricht...."  Wolf speaks in Lesen und Schreiben, of: "Unausgeglichenheiten und Unsicherheiten, die nicht leicht zu erklären sind." Both Kindl and the adult Nelly live with the constant sense of the precariousness of life, and the knowledge that everything has been called into question once, and it could happen again.

Both emerge from the war years as victims and survivors, with the significant difference that Kindl could recognize the enemy as a force external to himself, an identifiable Other; while that separation was impossible for Nelly Jordan.

Hamida Bosmajian aptly describes the situation of Nelly Jordan and her family in the introduction to her study of contemporary German literature and the shadow of Nazism: Metaphors of Evil:

The Nazis, who deprived the individual of all human and civil rights, also took from the Germans the right and basic human need to mourn one's dead and lament the destruction of cities. This may be the reason why it took Christa Wolf thirty years to write what is among other things, the litany of her lost childhood. The narrator analyzes the suffering of the old and the suffering of the young, and concludes: "Doch es gab Keinen, der nicht selber litt, und darum gibt es heute keinen zuverlässigen Zeugen."27

Heinrich Böll writes in an essay on Christa Wolf - "Wo habt ihr bloss gelebt?":

Die verfluchte, immer wieder und immer wieder mit Recht gestellte Frage: Wie war das denn nun wirklich? ist nur zu beantworten in der Literatur als ganzem, als über Jahrzehnte sich ausbreitendem Versuch der viele Variationen, viele Intonationen, unzählig viele Ausdrucksformen hat - von der "romanhaften Lüge", die keine ist, bis zum Erzählen
Wolf's *Kindheitsmuster* and Klima's *Der Gnadenrichter* offer two significant versions and variations of "how it was", to have lived through the War as a child, and to carry it inside oneself for the remainder of one's life.

*Kindheitsmuster* is situated unmistakeably in the world of historical and political actualities of recent and contemporary times. Wolf's narrator tries to re-enter and derive an understanding of the Zeitgeist of Nazi Germany and the circumstances that allowed events to progress and escalate as they did:

> Es ist nicht zu entscheiden, was zuerst dasein muss: die Bereitschaft vieler, aus ihrem Herzen eine Mördergrube machen zulassen, oder Mordkisten, die durch die Landschaft fahren und aus den Herzen Mördergruben machen. 29

Although the author says elsewhere that *Kindheitsmuster* is also "ein Gegenwartsbuch" - the specific events, political figures, and news broadcasts are identified explicitly and Wolf's identification with the autobiographical narrator is clear.

*Der Gnadenrichter*, Klima states in his introductory letter could be set anywhere, at any time. Although we know, from the author's biography that certain events in the novel proceed identically to those of his own life, the only exact names, dates, and events cited in *Der Gnadenrichter* are those given in the "Dokumente" and "Altstädter Ring" passages. 30

Igor Hajek, a colleague of Klima's from University days, now living in England, speculates that in the early 1960's, those writers who used diplomacy to avoid explicit criticism of the political situation fared better than Klima. He notes in a recent article in the *Index on Censorship*: "The lesson was not lost on the author and he seldom set his work in a definite
time and place again." The years immediately after the War in Czechoslovakia are alluded to with such nostalgic references as: "jenen bösen und zugleich seligen Zeiten, als das Leben noch voll Hoffnung und menschliches Tun zumindest scheinbar sinnvoll war."

No precise correlation is drawn between the Prague Spring and the period when Adam Kindl was finally able for once in his life, to pronounce just sentences.

Ich spürte ein Brennen im Hals, als ob auch ich in Tränen ausbrechen müsste, weil sie alle endlich ein Ohr fanden, weil das Recht sich endlich Gehör verschafften und mir die Ehre zufiel, in seinem Namen ein gerechtes Urteil zu sprechen.

Klima portrays his concerns on a broad canvas, juxtaposing, especially in the "Dokumente" passages, the barbarisms and cruelties of all ages, making the Altstädter Ring the heart of numerous concentric circles of horror and execution.

Wolf's emphasis is on the inner workings of the individual; the delicate mechanisms that control and shape the psyche; Klima's is on human society as it totters gracelessly from one age of injustice into the next, gleaning evidently, no wisdom from centuries past. The "Dokumente" illustrate dramatically that while the faces and forms of injustice change, the frequency and essence do not.

I have not attempted to use either a particular theoretical perspective or a specific terminology in my discussion of Wolf's Kindheitsmuster and Klima's Der Gnadenrichter. What I have undertaken to do is a close reading that would grant me the greatest possible proximity to the texts; with the hope that I could discuss them on their own terms, look closely at the language
they employ, and analyze what seem to emerge as the most important aspects of each, as well as certain parallels between the two works.

I have mentioned already and in one form or another, will come back to the fact that *Kindheitsmuster* and *Der Gnadenrichter* are to a great extent, reckonings of the authors' lives so far. Christa Wolf and Ivan Klima "give account" of their lives: both literally, in telling their life's story, and in a figurative sense; because despite their apparent irreligiosity, there is a strong sense of an appeal to a higher Judge in both narratives. This is evident in the prophetic tone of certain passages (especially in *Kindheitsmuster*) as well as in the nature of their enterprise: the search for vindication through confession and creation. The notion of conducting both a cross-examination of the Self and a self-defence, is central to both novels.

The fact that Wolf and Klima did not write these works sooner than they did, suggests that only with the passing of time, have the authentic shape, colour and proportion of their past lives emerged. That they could write them now, suggests that *Kindheitsmuster* and *Der Gnadenrichter* are not summations of lives but rather, lives-in-progress, which will be affected in turn, by the writing of the novels.

I have read and treated *Kindheitsmuster* and *Der Gnadenrichter* as two significant texts of contemporary literature, which merit close attention on the basis of their artistic qualities; but also and perhaps more importantly, as two novels which, in a time where the literary text is often regarded as an entity in itself, existing and having meaning only in a world of other texts, presume to have something of significance to say, on the subject of how we, as "post Auschwitz homo-sapiens" attempt to shape our lives in this world.
FOOTNOTES


8 H. Gordon Skilling, *Charter 77 and Human Rights in Czechoslovakia,* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1981), pp. 79, 211; In the Declaration of January 1, 1977, the original Chartists define Charter 77 as "a free informal, open community of people of different convictions, different faiths and different professions united by the will to strive, individually and collectively, for the respect of civic and human rights in our own country and throughout the world." (p. 211).


Igor Hájek, "Profile of Ivan Klima", Index on Censorship, 2, 83.

Asked to deliver a paper at a Symposium commemorating the centenary of Kafka's birth (in Vancouver, 1983), Ivan Klima replied that while honoured by the invitation, he would be unable to attend in person for fear of being prevented from re-entering his country, but would be pleased to send a paper to be read at the Symposium. The length of the paper that followed - seventy-five pages - illustrates Klima's current isolation from his own area of interest - the area of critical literary scholarship - for, anyone more informed, would have prepared a paper of perhaps one-third that length.

Skilling, p. 131.

These ideas are loosely paraphrased from an informal translation of the review, done for the purposes of this paper, by Marketa Goetz-Stankiewicz.

Miłosz, The Captive Mind, p. 73.

Perhaps a word should be said about the translation of Wolf's and Klima's novels. I am not qualified to evaluate the German translation of Klima's novel, originally Stojf, stojf, Šibenlička, by his translators, Alexandra and Gerhard Baumrucker, Christiane Auras and Helen Kolářová. Alexandra and Gerhard Baumrucker have translated a considerable number of Klima's works into German (including Ein Liebessommer, and several of his plays).

Wolf, to my knowledge, has no single translator into English, which may account, along with the difficulty of her prose, for the inconsistent quality of the English translations. The title A Model Childhood for Kindheitsmuster is not an accurate equivalent of the original, and might more accurately have
been translated as "Childhood Pattern/s".

The translation, done jointly by Ursule Molinaro and Hedwig Rappolt, omits the Table of Contents (Inhalt) which is included at the end of Kindheitsmuster and outlines the thematic content of each of the eighteen chapters. Far more damaging to the English translation however, is the fact that Molinaro and Rappolt have cut significant sections of the text of Kindheitsmuster entirely. Having done a thorough comparison, paragraph by paragraph, of translation and original, I have found just short of one hundred omissions, varying in length from a few words (a qualifying phrase, for example) to the longest, in Chapter 17, consisting of a cut of over two pages in length. Having found the East and West German editions to be identical, one can only surmise that for whatever reason, the translators have chosen to edit the text to one of a significantly shorter length, leaving out in the process, some extremely important passages (metaphysical residue!?).

Though one could not claim that the translation that they have produced outright distorts or misrepresents, a close comparison shows that it fails to do justice to the original text. Many of the passages that have been omitted are introspective speculations, not action passages, and one wonders what prompted the translators to cut what Wolf herself found essential to her text.

While it is not my intention to discuss the professional ethics of translation, one leaves the translation with the sense that an irresponsible act has been committed against Wolf's original text, and that, whatever the reason for the extensive editing might be, there ought, at least, to have been an acknowledgement at the beginning of the translation to indicate that it is an abridged version of a longer text. (The frequent cuts also explain why the more densely printed German copy nevertheless has seventy-five pages more text than the translation; 476 pages to 401.) For purposes other than those of
this discussion, it would be very interesting to contact the translators as well as Christa Wolf herself, in order to determine the motivation behind the editing.

Although I cannot compare Klima's original text with the German translation; translation from a Slavic language I am told is always difficult. The complete change of title demonstrates that the literary folksy echoes cannot be approximated. Even the fact that four people collaborated on the translation - and various styles had to be rendered in translation - newspaper reportage and legal documents as well as the style/s of narrator and author increases the difficulty of translating Klima's text.

20 Wolf, Kindheitsmuster, p. 291.
22 Ibid., p. 72.
23 Wolf, Kindheitsmuster, p. 375.
24 Klima, Der Gnadenrichter, p. 72.
26 Hamida Bosmajian, Metaphors of Evil, (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1979), p. xii.
27 Wolf, Kindheitsmuster, p. 346.
29 Wolf, Kindheitsmuster, p. 232.
30 One wonders whether Klima retains the hope that in the event of another "thaw", his circumspection and discretion might permit the publication of his novel in Czechoslovakia.
31 Igor Hájek, p. 40.

32 Klima, Der Gnadenrichter, pp. 11, 660.

"Genau sagen, was geschehen ist" –
genügt das?

Christa Wolf quotes
Ingeborg Bachmann

Es gibt eine Wahrheit jenseits der wichtigen
Welt der Fakten.

Christa Wolf
Christa Wolf begins by writing a version of Socialist Realist literature during the years after the War, and progressively writes - herself - free of formal and narrative constraints to find, increasingly, her own voice, style, and structure. In the trio of works comprised by Der Geteilte Himmel, 1963, Nachdenken über Christa T., 1968, and Kindheitsmuster, 1976; the increasingly complex narrative structures reflect the author's progressively complex view of "reality".

Gunter Kunert says of Nachdenken über Christa T., that its theme is not - "die Wirklichkeit, sondern der Bezug zur Wirklichkeit."


Similarly, Jack Zipes speaks of - "the reflections of a fragmented and refracted reality by the narrator in Nachdenken über Christa T." 

Whereas in Der Geteilte Himmel, we get a fairly conventional story, albeit one with flashbacks in time, and some stream of consciousness elements; in Nachdenken über Christa T., Wolf creates an anti-story of sorts. The narrator comments about Christa T.'s relationship with Kostia:

Denn eine richtige kleine Geschichte war es, mit Einleitung, Hauptteil, Höhepunkt, Umschlag und schnellem Abfall, mit Kabale und Liebe, bloss wir haben es, da wir mitten darin steckten, nicht gesehen. Da sie erzählbar geworden ist, scheint sie hinter uns zu liegen...
What the narrator attempts to say in *Nachdenken über Christa T.* is neither past nor easily tellable. "The difficulty of saying 'I'" - a constant refrain in the book, parallels the reader's difficulty on occasion, in determining the source of a thought, an idea, or a sentence. Diary fragments, snatches of conversations - some actual, others invented "for the truth's sake", extracts from letters, sent and unsent, quotations from other literary works: all of these make of the text a tapestry of memory, longing, and imagination. The structure of the narrative is inseparable from the structure of memory, which does not function logically or chronologically, but through intuition, symbols, and images.

Even the titles of these two earlier novels are symbolic. *Der Geteilte Himmel* sets East against West; Socialism against Capitalism: the world is divided into two camps. *Nachdenken über Christa T.* both complicates and modifies the possibility of such clear-cut certainty: Nachdenken - "ihr nach-denken" - a meditation, a speculation; like memory - "eine Tätigkeit und die Voraussetzung sie auszuüben...."4 "Nachdenken" suggests an activity and a knowledge that cannot be certified: it also implies re-thinking, or having second thoughts.

As the title of *Kindheitsmuster* suggests, Wolf's longest and most formidable work is to be conceived of as a pattern, but it is a pattern consisting of; "ein unglaublich verfilztes Geflecht"5 While the texts of *Der Geteilte Himmel* and *Nachdenken über Christa T.* remain within narrative time, in *Kindheitsmuster*, narrative time and the actual time of writing coincide, so that the last day of the narrator's story is the day on which Christa Wolf completes her manuscript.

Not having access to Wolf's earliest work, *Moskauer Novelle*, 1960, I have had to rely on summaries and critical reviews for information. Critics agree in regarding it as "conforming to party strictures" and generally adhering to the requirements of Socialist Realism. I am using the definition of Socialist Realism given by Christine Cosentino, in; "Eine Untersuchung des Sozialistischen
Realismus im Werke Christa Wolfs", based on the five following "Schlüsselbegriffe":

1) ideologisch determinierter Ideengehalt
2) marxistisch-leninistische Parteilichkeit des Helden bzw des Autors
3) Optimismus
4) positiver Held (Ausnahmeerscheinung)
5) und Vereinfachung der Form.

Cosentino calls Socialist Realism: "eine Kunsttheorie, die unter Anleitung der Partei die Entwicklung des sozialistischen Bewusstseins und die Verwirklichung des Kommunismus spiegeln soll,"

Leaving aside her short fiction and critical writings (including Unter den Linden, 1974, Lesen und Schreiben, 1971 and 1980, Gesammelte Erzählungen, 1974 and 1980), I see Der Geteilte Himmel, Nachdenken über Christa T., and Kindheitsmuster as constituting the core of Wolf's fiction. The first two, I would propose, are the structural and to some extent, thematic, forerunners to Kindheitsmuster, Wolf's opus magnum to date.

All three novels have as protagonist and in Nachdenken über Christa T. and Kindheitsmuster also as narrator, female citizens of the German Democratic Republic expected to help build the socialist society, who are prevented from seeing the realization of their personal dreams for a variety of reasons. All three are intelligent, sensitive and discerning individuals, and all three come to grief in some sense, through undue optimism.

Each of Rita Seidel in Der Geteilte Himmel, the anonymous narrator of Nachdenken über Christa T. as well as Christa T. herself, and the nameless narrator of Kindheitsmuster, corresponds quite closely in age to the age of Christa Wolf at the time she wrote the novels. Their ages increase in proportion to hers. As one critic has suggested:
Wolf relates to her characters in her function as narrator just as she wants them to relate to one another. In most of her works, the female protagonist is closely associated with her, generally born the same year, generally having gone through the same experiences.

**Der Geteilte Himmel**, 1963, already oversteps the clearly-defined tenets of Socialist Realism. Western critics differ in their opinion of which of Wolf's novels marked the most significant change in the national GDR literature. While the general consensus appears to be *Nachdenken über Christa T.*, some have also found *Der Geteilte Himmel* to constitute a definite break with the past. Again I quote Cosentino, who remarks about *Der Geteilte Himmel*:

> Den mit den starren Prinzipien des Sozialistischen Realismus vertrauten Leser überrascht zunächst die anspruchsvolle Form, die alles andere als einfach ist.... Ferner vermisst man die überklare Deutlichkeit, die dem Sozialistischen Realismus die sonst übliche Schwarz-Weiss Farbung gibt.

In an introduction to the English translation of *Der Geteilte Himmel*, Jack Zipes claims:

> Of all her novels, *Divided Heaven* marked an important historical breakthrough, not only for Christa Wolf as a critical writer, but also for prose fiction in the GDR.... Aside from openly criticizing some of the more regressive official policies, the novel was one of the first to experiment with flashbacks, stream-of-consciousness, and impressionistic writing in order to mirror the problematic existence of a young woman, who could be considered a true product of a new GDR state.

*Der Geteilte Himmel* opens with a poetic Prologue by an unidentified narrator who includes herself among those who have witnessed; "A shadow fallen over the city", in a suspended time stopped only by the erection of the Berlin Wall. The Prologue serves as a step from an indefinite time into narrative time. The opening pages of the novel in particular, convey the strong sense of a movement from an unspecified, idyllic time in which village life passes with
serene uneventfulness - "day after day....week after week" - as it always has; in which girl continues to meet boy and they live happily in the village forever - to a specific though inconsistent time, the most clearly-defined in flashback scenes.

This impression of a fairy tale time is reinforced by the frequent textual references to fairy tales. Manfred refers to Rita as "the little brown girl in a brown fur cap, like in a Russian novel." He asks Rita: "Little Red Riding Hood, when will the wolf come and gobble you up?" When he attempts to tell her about his past, it is as an anti-fairy tale:

The first thing I remember - I've heard it as often as other kids hear about the Sleeping Beauty or Red Riding Hood - is the story of my birth. This is how it goes. There was once a man and wife who loved each other as people only love in fairy tales.13

The story he goes on to tell however, reveals anything but the stuff that fairy tales are made of.

Neither these elements however, nor the occurrence of impressionistic time snatches, alter the fact that Der Geteilte Himmel is basically a linear narrative and adheres to the conventions of traditional story-telling. As in most of Wolf's stories we know the end from the beginning, but here it is with the added meaning of being distinguishable from the beginning.

Rita Seidel, at least in her deep desire to find a correspondence between socialism and happiness, is still a heroine of sorts, and mirrors the author's attitude towards socialism at that time: while the road to a socialist society has more obstacles and is much more difficult than one anticipated, it is still the only conceivable road to travel. When Rita Seidel questions, doubts, despairs; the omniscient, convinced, and rather moralistic narrator confidently directs her back and suggests the appropriate way to cope with doubt. If Rita has grave reservations, the narrator has not. Der Geteilte Himmel, is still largely a Socialist Realist novel.
Insofar as it is the narrative technique that is seen to comprise this historical breakthrough, I have no argument with Cosentino or Zipes. Not until Nachdenken über Christa T. however, in my opinion, does the central focus of the novel actually become the individual, not only within a certain society, but to some extent, as an opponent of that society. Nachdenken über Christa T., I believe, constitutes not only a complete break with Socialist Realism, but also something of a shift of loyalties on the part of the author. The tension between the free-thinking individual and a closed society has become — literally — some critics have suggested, a matter of life and death. The narrator speculates:

Und die Frage, woran Christa T. gestorben ist, werde ich selbst stellen, zu ihrer Zeit, ohne in Zweifel zu ziehen, dass es die Krankheit war, Leukamie, mit der sie nicht fertig werden konnte.14 Her comment of course, has exactly the effect of throwing open the question of what it was that Christa T. could not cope with.

In "Selbstinterview", 1968, Wolf says about Nachdenken über Christa T.: "The concrete episodes swim in my memory like small islands — that is the structure of the story...."15 Alexander Stephan comments on the complicated structure of Nachdenken über Christa T.:

Semantische Doppeldeutigkeiten, literarische Anspielungen, Zitate, wechselnde Erzählperspektiven, eine schwer zu durchschauende Zeitstruktur, die freie Verarbeitung von historisch belegbaren und erfundenen 'Quellen' — was in Nachdenken zuweilen an formalistische Spielerei und elitäre Literarisierung zu grenzen scheint — will nichts anderes sein als der Garant für das Engagement des Autors.16

Five years after Der Geteilte Himmel, the narrative structure of Nachdenken über Christa T. is much more complex and convoluted. If Der Geteilte Himmel marks Wolf's formal break away from the tenets of Socialist Realism, I would suggest that it is in Nachdenken über Christa T. that she does it thematically.
Christa T. lacks all the qualities of a good Socialist Realist heroine, or perhaps one should say rather, that she is everything that a Socialist Realist heroine is not.

While *Der Geteilte Himmel* is essentially the story of a single individual, *Nachdenken über Christa T.* tells three stories: the narrator tells the story of Christa T.; she is surprised to discover that she is actually telling her own life; and the two stories converge into the story of the life of a friendship. Each story is made important in turn; each serves to commentate the others; but essentially it is the convergence of these two lives that is the propelling drive behind the narrative.

If *Der Geteilte Himmel* is basically a linear narrative with some knots and detours along the way, and *Nachdenken* a kind of tapestry; *Kindheitsmuster*, while thematically a "Geflecht", is to my mind, structurally a vertical spiral that widens as it rises.

*Kindheitsmuster* is without a doubt, Wolf's most complex and ambitious work to date, structurally as well as thematically. Here - "the secret of the third person which can bring down more reality upon herself than the first person 'I' " and "the difficulty of saying 'I' " - constant refrains in *Nachdenken über Christa T.*, become narrative and structural devices. The splitting of her experience into second and third persons becomes for the narrator, a distancing technique, and for the author, a poetic way of distinguishing among different levels of time:


It simultaneously and paradoxically posits a goal: the eventual meeting and convergence of the second and Third persons with the First:
Der Mensch, der es gelernt hat, sich selber nicht als ein Ich, sondern als ein Du zu nehmen. Ein Stilelement wie dieses kann nicht Willkür oder Zufall sein.

Wolfgang Emmerich, in a "Laudatio auf Christa Wolf anlässlich der Verleihung des Bremer Literaturpreises, 1977" speaks of *Kindheitsmuster* as: "eine Art Gerichtsverfahren mit sich selbst, ein Selbst-verhör." Concerning the form of the novel, he comments: "Keine einlinige Fabel also, keine runde Geschichte, sondern eine komplizierte Schreibtechnik."20

Although Christa Wolf herself suggests that to speak of layers (Ebene) in a narrative is inaccurate and reductive, with regards to time at least, it is possible to isolate three distinct levels in the narrative of *Kindheitsmuster*.

At the beginning of the eighth chapter, the narrator speculates:

...Vergangenheit. Gegenwart. Reise nach Polen. Manuskript. Hilfskonstruktionen, erdacht um das Material zu organisieren und es, wenn schon nicht durch den simplen Mechanismus von Ursache und Wirkung, so durch dieses System ineinandergreifender Schichten von dir abzutrennen.20

The bottom level takes up the years of the narrator's early childhood, beginning with her earliest memory of herself, through the years of the War, and ending with her release, at the age of sixteen, from the TB sanitorium. The child of forty years ago seems to be a different person altogether, and the narrator simply gives her a name in order to talk about her:

Aus dem Wohnzimmerfenster hätte die Mutter nun das Kind zum Abendbrot zu rufen, wobei sein Name, der hier gelten soll, zum erstenmal genannt wird: Nelly! Und so, nebenbei, auch der Taufakt vollzogen wäre, ohne Hinweise auf die langwierigen Mühen bei der Suche nach passenden Name.21

The second level of the narrative, lying much closer to the narrator's present life, consists of a visit of forty-eight hours in May 1971, to Grozów Wielkopolski, formerly Landsberg, and the place of her childhood. It is the
flood and the simultaneous recesses of memory, experienced during this visit, that formally prompts the narrated investigation of the narrator's past. Again she chooses to distance herself from this time, and addresses herself in the second person, as "You".

The years during which the narrative is constructed - 1972 to 1975 - comprise the third level of narrative, referred to by Wolf and critics as "die Gegenwartsebene". It is situated in the general present of the narrator; wherein she relates the events of her childhood and the 1971 visit to Landsberg, to current world events, and past and present reflect and enrich each other.

One critic suggests:

Erzählerin als Vermittlungsgestalt und Kindheits-Ich als erzählte Figur machen die komplexen Beziehungen und Widersprüche im Bewusstsein Wolfs zu lebendiger Erzählgegenwart.22

One might also identify a fourth level, a kind of specific present time, which would exist within the same time period as the third, but involve the actual moment of writing, and the constant reiteration of the difficulty of remembering and telling the truth. Included in detail in this fourth level, is the internal process involved in creating the narrative. It is this aspect that makes Kindheitsmuster as much a story about the attempt to write a book, as anything else, and most clearly identifies the narrator of the story as the author of the novel.23

Incorporated into the narrative is the narrator's deliberation over possible titles for the book:

Titelproben, beim Einkaufsweg mit H.... Grund-Muster. Verhaltens-Muster.
Kindheitsmuster, sagte H. beiläufig, es war vor der Apotheke, Ecke Thälmann Strasse. Damit war es geregelt.

Similarly the planning of the subsequent chapters as well as difficulties and interruptions in writing are incorporated into the flow of the narrative and the
text of the novel:

...In diesen Tagen setzt du, an die täglichen Arbeitsstunden gebunden wie an die Willkür einer Kapiteleinteilung, eine ⁴ oben auf die neue Seite, um dieses Kapitel, deinem Plan gemäss, der Schilderung einer Tauffeier und der Legende vom Zustandekommen einer Hochzeit zu widmen...²⁴

The author herself explains the structure of *Kindheitsmuster* in the transcript of discussions following a series of readings from *Kindheitsmuster* in October and December of 1975, the year in which it was completed. She describes her growing realization and concept of how the work was to proceed, including the fact that she spent more than a year simply finding the right way to start:

...Ich habe sehr viele Seiten liegen, die andere Erzählweisen ausprobieren und die mich alle nicht befriedigten.... Man hat nur einen Erzählton im Ohr und eine Atmosphäre...einen Erzählraum, den man gern ausfüllen möchte.²⁵

It is the indivisibility then, of past and present, of memory and action, of living and writing - that determines the multi-layered depth of Wolf's narrative. Several days before she began writing the final draft of *Kindheitsmuster*, the author commented: "Die Kompliziertheit einer Erzählweise aber ist und bleibt ein Problem. Man kann nicht alles einfach sagen."²⁶ Interesting too, with relation to her own work, is Wolf's evaluation in 1966, of the writers who have made the deepest impression on her:

Gemeinsam ist ihnen, dass die Strukturen ihrer Arbeit auf einer sehr komplizierten, öfter durchaus indirekte Weise mit der Struktur ihrer Wirklichkeit übereinstimmen.²⁷
The nameless narrator of *Kindheitsmuster* describes a sudden nocturnal realization of the shape and tone that her account would have to take, in order to make the telling possible:

Schlagartig war dir auch klar, dass nicht ein schnell zu machendes Ergebnis zu erwarten war, sondern eine lange Zeit von Arbeit und Zweifel. Dass es nicht beim nächsten Buch Ernst würde, sondern bei diesem.

The narrator, like the author, is a writer, and this is not her first literary endeavor. In some sense however, it is "the book" - a culmination of literary and life aspiration, a crisis point in living and writing, a landmark which, as clearly as the War in the child-Nelly's life, will have its own before and after. That dates, places, and events of the narrator's account are co-incidental with those of Christa Wolf's biography, is of course, no more coincidence than the protagonist's name in *Nachdenken über Christa T*. *Kindheitsmuster* is as much autobiographical as novelistic, if one allows that autobiography is always a mixture of biographical data giving the factual outlines of a life, and an imaginative reconstruction made possible by memory, hindsight, reflection, interpretation, and commentary; by a narrator who is perhaps only nominally the same character as the one he / she is portraying.

The relationship between author and narrator is always fascinating in Christa Wolf's novels. *Kindheitsmuster*, which is the most clearly autobiographical, bears the claim that:

Alle Figuren in diesem Buch sind Erfindungen der Erzählerin.
Keine ist identisch mit einer lebenden oder toten Person. Eben-
That Wolf subsequently felt free to discuss the story of Nelly Jordan and her family as indeed the story of her own childhood, and in fact makes use of episodes from *Kindheitsmuster* in other autobiographical writings, is perhaps not so much a contradiction of the passage cited above, as an indication that whatever "truth" the novel might contain does not lie in a point-by-point correspondence between Nelly's and the young Christa's lives. Verifiable facts and details do not constitute the novel's authenticity, which is what the author aspires towards.

The narrator in *Nachdenken* says of Christa T. that she was never very good at keeping things apart - such as dreams and waking reality, life and literature, imagination and facts. At the end of her literary studies, her thesis, ostensibly a dissertation on the works of Theodor Storm, turns out to be as least as much a profession of her own philosophy and convictions. Similarly, the narrator of *Nachdenken* does not maintain a consistent distance between Christa T.'s story and her own. The fact that the story of Christa T. becomes the story of their friendship as well as the narrator's reconsideration of her own life, does not account for the occasional merging of the two personae into one. The relationship among author, narrator, and Christa T. has been described as:

...eine weitgehende Anonymität der Ich-Erzählerin, die als Maske zum verbindenden Glied zwischen Christa Wolf und der erzählten Welt wird, wobei die Namensverwandtschaft mit Christa T. unterstützt durch die umfassende Anteilnahme der Autorin an der Erzählerin und der Protagonistin, extrem Autobiographisches suggieriert.31

In her discussion of *Nachdenken* as an elegaic romance, one critic states:

Wolf's narrator is barely characterized at all; at times she almost blurs into the author; at times they both blur into Wolf's name-sake, Christa T. To make a sharp distinction among the three - author, narrator, heroine - forcing ironic clashes among them... is no part of Wolf's intention.32
In *Kindheitsmuster*, the author's voice can continually be discerned in the text of the anonymous narrator: the narrator tells her story, after all, but it is the author who writes the book. To demonstrate that they are one and the same person is neither possible nor perhaps, crucial. What is certain, is that there is a continuous and close identification at least, among author, narrator, and protagonist.

In various interviews and addresses, Christa Wolf expresses the belief that there is a proper time to write about certain matters, and that it is as important for the writer to find "her time" as it is, her subject matter. Candour does not come too easily to the narrator of *Kindheitsmuster*, as the similarly anonymous narrator of *Nachdenken über Christa T.* suggests, concerning events that are far enough removed in time and proximity to enable a comfortable and ordered re-telling. On the contrary, the very fascination of the book arises from the narrator's admission and investigation of her own "strategies of concealment"; those "Hemmungen" or inner constrictions that constantly intrude between the sincere attempt "to overcome oneself and find out the truth", and the urgent desire to forget, to leave painful memories, unsettled grief, and unresolved guilt in the farthest corners of consciousness.33

In an address to the Akademie der Künste der DDR in the late fall of 1975, shortly after the completion of *Kindheitsmuster*, Wolf states:

Meiner Meinung ist jedoch, dass Literatur versuchen sollte, diese Schichten zu zeigen, die in uns liegen - nicht so scharf geordnet, nicht katalogisiert und schon 'bewältigt', wie wir es gern möchten.... Es ist, glaube ich, wirkliche Aufgabe von Literatur, etwas Bewegung hineinzubringen in die inneren Schichten, mit deren Unbeweglichkeit man sich gern beruhigt, indem man Erstarrung mit wirklicher Ruhe verwechselt, die nur aus einer inneren Freiheit kommen kann.34
The metaphor of introducing motion into paralyzed parts is evocative, suggesting as it does, frozen limbs slowly regaining life, in an agony of sensation. How tempting it would be, just to drift off in the frozen snowbanks of oblivion, the narrator implies.

The narrator of *Kindheitsmuster* is alternately overwhelmed, obsessed, despairing, deeply content, and convinced of the impossibility ultimately, of interpreting "the steadily proliferating material" that forces its way into the narrative, through memory, dreams, conversations, documents, experiences, and the simple fact that every day brings new variations of the already established structures of experience.

If *Kindheitsmuster* is the story of a life of an individual, the novel as a whole is the story of a generation; that generation of adolescents whose lives were forever altered and whose youth was prematurely finished by the events of the Second World War, which in Germany, determined the age of innocence and experience in a fundamentally new sense. "Du kommst nicht umhin, auf die Tat­sache aufmerksam zu machen, dass in diesem Land Unschuld sich fast unfehlbar an Lebensjahren messen lässt;" the narrator suggests.

The years of innocence, she concludes, are short indeed. Even the ten year old child Nelly, is implicated in Germany's past; implicated by birthplace; by avid participation at some cost to her integrity, in the Hitler youth; by her success finally, in distinguishing between what she was permitted to know and what she should rather forget or conceal. Childhood itself, it appears to the much older narrator in retrospect, was not that haven of security, happiness and blissful ignorance that she would like to have lived. Nor has it provided a morally reliable foundation for the years that were to come after.

Self-knowledge and knowledge of others have taken on a new meaning:
Steckt denn in der Frage "Wer bist du?" noch irgendein Sinn? Ist sie nicht hoffnungslos veraltet, "überholt von der Verhörfrage: "Was hast du getan?", die in dir selbst auf die schwache Gegenfrage stösst: Was hat man mich tun lassen?

Identity as a result of past action, good or evil, is the issue. The question: given the liberal doses of both in her own past, and the difficulty of arriving at a clear moral judgment, is it possible to merge these influences into a single Self; a being consisting of past and present, past potential, unrealized and unchallenged, and present possibility, fluctuating and uncertain? The evidence is circumstantial and incomplete. The cross-examination by conscience cannot proceed. Only the narrator herself is accorded the right and indeed, the obligation, to search out what was good and what was blameworthy in her past. Of her own creation too, are the standards by which she assesses herself.

If Kindheitsmuster is the story both of a single life and of a generation, there is nevertheless nothing straightforward or typical about the book. The complexity of the narrator's identity in life is reflected in the complex narrative structure of the novel. It contains passages of prose poetry, dream analysis, linguistic experiment and etymology, revealing the narrator's fascination with the language and the power of words over thought and action.

What emerges from this profusion of information and insight is the all-important desire on the part of the narrator, - "Sich frei-zu-schreiben" - to "write herself free" - of a boundless and nameless fear whose presence is felt throughout the process of narrating. Writing becomes both the prerequisite and the means of dispelling this fear. Wolf says about her writing: "Für mich ist das Schreiben ein Weg, Angst zu überwinden. Oder falls sie nicht
zu überwinden ist, sie mir bewusst zu machen und mit ihr leben zu können, ohne durch sie eingeschränkt zu werden."

In the penultimate chapter; "Ein Kapitel Angst"; the narrator comments:

Die Hoffnung freizukommen.

The process of "Sich-frei-schreiben" however involves more than this nameless dread. A time span of forty years of "Kriegs und Nachkriegszeiten" is residual in the active and passive memories of the narrator and demands to be given form. The burden of her untold past, of memories carefully packaged and set aside, of words and phrases left unchallenged and others left unspoken, of shattering silences, of epidemics of guilt where there is no apparent cause, and headaches which have no known physical origin - evidence that the body has knowledge that the mind cannot tolerate: these are some of the grave concerns of the narrator as survivor. The narrator as writer, faces in addition, the responsibility of forbidding herself distortions, legends, and half-truths; of expressing herself with the greatest possible authenticity; of determining "wovon zu reden und wovon zu schweigen". The goal, she states, is: "phantastische Genauigkeit." 39

"Sich-frei-schreiben" functions as a concept on the thematic level, as objective on the narrative level, and as device on the structural level. (The last one becomes evident when one considers Kindheitsmuster in the context of Wolf's two earlier novels, Der Geteilte Himmel and Nachdenken über Christa T., which I have done briefly already.

The narrator aspires to write herself free of the past. "The past" is a convenient category for everything one has undergone, done, and been, leading up to the present moment. That it is not, however, a limited body of experience, and in fact is inseparable from the present, is asserted as the opening statement of the novel: "Das Vergangene ist nicht tot, es ist nicht einmal vergangen. Wir
The insistence upon the equidistance of time and experience is a central theme of the narrator's odyssey through time and space. It is intensified by the structure, which is spiral-like, multi-layered, self-referential, permutative; and subversive of narrative conventions. (This sense of the equidistance of past time is not evident in Ivan Klima's Der Gnadenrichter. I have discussed this in the second Chapter.)

There comes a time, suggests the narrator, when it becomes mandatory to make a choice: "Sprachlos bleiben oder in der dritten Person leben". "Sprachlos bleiben"; to remain without speech or language, unable to articulate or write: "In der dritten Person leben"; because it has yet to be demonstrated that the adult female narrator and the young girl whose world fell apart, and who suffered massive inner upheaval and disintegration during the long years of the War, can be called by the same name.

Memory, with all its traces and subterfuges, is both the window to the narrator's past, and the drawn curtain through which the outline and identity of people, places and events must be ascertained. Memory is her indispensable ally and devious opponent, a telescope and its sullied lens. It enables self-identification, yet functions as a "Betrugssystem":

In die Erinnerung drängt sich die Gegenwart ein und der heutige Tag ist schon der letzte Tag der Vergangenheit. So würden wir uns unaufhaltsam fremd werden ohne unser Gedächtnis an das, was wir getan haben, an das, was uns zugestossen ist. Ohne unser Gedächtnis an uns selbst.

Memory enables a sense of continuity, and yet it is precisely "unser Gedächtnis an das, was wir getan haben, an das was uns zugestossen ist", which is a source of unresolved grief and pain, and unanswered questions.
The narrator's desire to achieve a clear recall is not unambiguous. It is modified by the considerable number of taboos, articulated and unspoken, which surface repeatedly in her account, in various forms. In attempting to tell her life, she walks on dangerous ground, the knowledge of which is expressed literally in one of her dreams.

The narrator's dreams and nightmares during the writing of her book testify to the presence of old fears and taboos, and the emergence of new ones. Images of the concentration camp and mass murder alternate with metaphorical variations on the theme of her obligation and inability, to tell and write all. The power of old taboos continues and the narrator is forced to explicate silences which have long denoted the border between what one could conceive of, and what, by implication, was to be denied.

Lutz, her pragmatic and factual brother, insists that certain things must remain sacrosanct; that there is always the danger of going too far. The narrator comments: "Was er will - und muss - ist: warnen. An die Grenzen erinnern.... Ich glaube, dass es für alles Grenzen gibt. Dass sie - die Eltern - jenseits der Grenzen zu bleiben haben, Tabu sind."42

(One even wonders to what extent Wolf's choice of political examples and anecdotes is affected by the pressure to steer close of anything that falls too close to home. The narrator suggests at one point in the book that the matter of Stalin must also still be talked about. Wolf, questioned as to why she writes about the USA, Viet Nam, Chile, and avoids anything more than an implicit criticism of her GDR contemporaries, gives perhaps a less than satisfying reply:

Allerdings kam in der Zeit, in der ich das Buch schrieb die Haupterschütterung in bezug auf faschistische und faschistoide Entwicklung, für die ich besonders offen war, die mich besonders betrafen, aus diesen Ländern. Das habe ich aufgenommen.43)

To speak in spite of taboos which have maintained silence among an entire
generation, puts the narrator's physical, emotional and psychological welfare in jeopardy. Headaches, stomach problems, and sleeplessness reveal the toll the process of writing takes on her health. Periods of joy and despair, elation and anxiety, accompany feelings of accomplishing what she has set out to do, and alternately, of being dominated by her material. Intense conviction gives way to enormous uncertainty concerning the responsibility and decision to speak out, in the face of a technology so sophisticated as to make the human voice seem almost unnecessary, if not obsolete. The decision to speak, she affirms again and again throughout. Her question is not "Ought one to write?"; but rather, "How ought one to write?"

The composition of Kindheitsmuster is somewhat like that of a musical fugue in that it introduces and continually reintroduces subjects and themes which are "bound together according to the strictest laws"; the exact nature of which the narrator does not elucidate. Memory, predominant among these recurring themes, is possibly most intricately woven into the texture of the entire work. The narrator, fascinated with words and etymologies, plays with many approaches to defining the process:

"Gedächtnis. Im heutigen Sinn: "Bewahren des früher Erfahrenen und die Fähigkeit dazu." Kein Organ also, sonder eine Tätigkeit und die Voraussetzung sie auszuüben, in einem Wort."

Memory is "a process, and the capacity for carrying it out"; present access to past experience, present interpretation of past action, and present assessment of earlier remembering. The process of remembering is analytic, evaluative, interpretive, censorial, and circumlocutional, as well as simply retrospective.

In one of numerous extended definitions of memory, the narrator observes:

The importance of the moral component of memory is reiterated later in the text: "Gedächtnis[ist] kein festgefügter Block...der in unserem Gehirn unveränderlich festsitzt; eher schon, falls grosse Worte erlaubt sind, ein wiederholt-er moralischer Akt." 44b

The act of writing-oneself-free engages memory on several levels in Kindheitsmuster. On the personal level, it requires the narrator to unbarri-cade herself; to open the floodgates which have long held the voices at bay; to face her own antipathy towards her childhood and her dislike, at times, for the child she was and whom she envisions as still surviving in some sense; to examine her own "strategies of concealment"; to admit and relive fear and guilt residual from Nelly's childhood as well as that in her present; all of which have long been left undisturbed:

...Du aber, neunundzwanzig Jahre später, wirst dich fragen müssen, wieviel verkapselfte Höhlen ein Gedächtnis aufnehmen kann, ehe es aufhören muss zu-funktionieren. Wieviel Energie und welche Art Energie es dauernd aufwendet, die Kapseln, deren Wände mit der Zeit morsch und brüchig werden mögen, immer neu abzudichten.45

The activity of Sich-frei-schreiben, with the emphasis on the writing, involves the paradox expressed in the passage quoted earlier in this discussion; namely the difficulty of extrapolating, ordering, and interpreting events, "which in reality, were so entangled as to be inexplicable."

Peter Beicken and Rolf J. Goebel speak about, "ein Grundimpuls der Christa Wolf als Schriftstellerin", which they analyze as:

Schreiben aus Schuld, Erzählen als Rechtfer- tigung. Dem Schuldigen ist der Mund verschlossen – es sei denn, er wollte Geständnisse machen oder sich der Gefahr der Lüge aussetzen. Wer erzählt und sich geltend macht als Gewissen (und das liegt der subjektiven Authentizität als ethischer Impuls zugrunde), der schreibt sich frei von Schuld.46
The presence of guilt runs like a dark stain through the narrative of Kindheitsmuster and comprises a considerable portion of the narrator's memory. Rather than a specific emotion or attitude, it is a heavy grey cloud that oppresses Nelly, no matter which way she turns:

Jedesmal, wenn es ihr gelungen war, sich freizusprechen von Schuld, musste sie erleben, dass in einer tieferen, dunkleren Schicht in ihr: die Frage neu geboren wieder aufstand, dass die Antwort schon anders ausfiel, und wieder anders beim nächsten Mal, bis jede Gewissheit über sie selbst in einem bodenlosen Trichter zu versinken drohte.47

Guilt is bound inextricably with denial, concealment, and silence. It simmers and sickens, and as long as there is no acknowledgement of responsibility, suggests the narrator, there can be no catharsis of grief, and no acquittal.

"Schuld und Verschweigen, welche sich unaufloslich und für immer ineinander verfilzten, in Nelly's Gemüt zogen: the connection suggests denial of one's involvement, whether willing or reluctant - concealment of what one knows and would rather not know - the stifling of one's inner misgivings about the Führer's infallibility, even while one salutes and keeps silent.

The question that the narrator poses repeatedly on Nelly's behalf and which contains its own answer, is: if the German Reich is expanding daily and Germany is winning the War as is proclaimed hourly on the radio, and if every German is pleased to serve Hitler - why then are Nelly, her mother, and others in the family, seized by bouts of despair, self-hatred, and migraine headaches, all with no apparent cause? She comes across a photograph of the Jordan family at Nelly's confirmation, and observes:

Der zugleich erschrockene und abweisende Augenausdruck... Vor allem aber die unbewusste Trauer, die über die Figur liegt. Eine Vierzehnjährige, die nicht weiß, mit welchen Wörtern und im Namen welcher Götter sie ihre Trauer ausdrücken soll. Die sich im Namen der Götter, denen sie sich unterwirft, für diese heimliche Trauer bestrafen muss.48
It is another interesting paradox that even while the many faces of guilt—rational and irrational—seen in retrospect, lie like a heavy hand on Nelly's shoulder, it is also the memory of this guilt which allows the narrator the hope, "Sich frei-zu-sprechen", now that the mature adult can assess its causes and its legitimacy: "Wie sollte sie ahnen, dass das Ertragen eines schlechten Gewissens unter den waltenden Verhältnissen eine notwendige Bedingung zur inneren Freiheit war?" 49

The extent of actual knowing and not-knowing at the time, is almost impossible to determine, in retrospect. Nelly's Onkel Emil Dunst allows that:

Mag ja manches passiert sein, mag es ja, was nicht vollkommen seine Ordnung hatte, aber bei mir doch nicht, doch nicht bei mir. Unsereins hat doch nichts gewusst, und wenn einer ein gutes Gewissen haben kann, dann bin ich das wohl, bin ich, jawohl.

"Guten Gewissens verstarb er," the narrator comments. "Und manches wäre einfacher, wenn er schlicht gelogen hätte."

Thirty years later, she hears echoes of these words from the taxi driver, on the road to Schoenefeld; "der alles an Ort und Stelle miterlebt hat": "Ja: Wenn sich der Deutsche auch so was hätte zuschulden kommen lassen. Aber ich sage Ihnen: Dazu hatten wir ja auch gar nicht die Zeit! Es liegt uns auch nicht. 50

The fact that thirty years of newspapers, radio, and television, have not affected the taxi-driver's conception of what went on, and that he is assuredly not unique in this regard, intensifies that urgency that the narrator feels about the necessity to repeat questions that have been laid aside without ever having been answered. 51

The mechanisms of memory, repression, and self-censorship that make such claims possible, even as the statement of sincere beliefs, haunt and grieve the narrator, and prompt the question not: How can they live with their conscience? but, "What kind of circumstances are those that cause a collective loss of conscience?"
More often it is silence, both then and now, that accompanies the knowledge that one is somehow implicated. The narrator recalls, as one of the most horrifying episodes in her memory, her short-lived acquaintanceship with Horst Binder, a young emulator of Hitler, so smitten with his idol that he imitated him in murder and suicide. She notes: "Deutsche Familien bringen einander im Schlafzimmer um. Werden sie gesprochen haben? Nirgendwo wird so abgrundtief geschwiegen wie in deutschen Familien."

This story serves as a grim microcosm of the most horrifying propensities at large in Nazi Germany. The graphic description of the imagined scene reveals with terrible irony that the fanaticism and thoroughness so carefully inculcated in Horst Binder by his superiors, have misfired. The worst dangers of total subservience and annihilation of self are realized: "Der Fähnleinführer Horst Binder ist im Gebrauch von Waffen unterwiesen, nur war nicht vorgesehen, dass deutsche Eltern und ein Hitlerjugendführer das Ziel seiner Schüsse sein sollten."52

In the penultimate quotation, the narrator establishes the connection between silence and death, literally as well as poetically, as the German word "totschweigen" suggests. The suppression and concealment of emotion and experience, the lack of communication, and refusal to acknowledge guilt, she intimates, eventually kills.

The narrator of Kindheitsmuster writes-herself-free not only as a survivor of the War and NS Germany, but with regard to certain obligations which she sees as inherent in the writer's task. (Christa Wolf states in Lesen und Schreiben: "Dabei steht immer die Frage vor Augen: Wie aber soll man heute schreiben?... Wie lange noch soll die kleine Spitze des Eisbergs
How and when to write, what to say, and what to leave unsaid: these are questions frequently entertained by the narrator and open to the reader's consideration. The process of creating a book is as much the central concern as is recreating Nelly's life.

If the modern novel is characterized to some extent by its self-consciousness and self-reflexiveness, *Kindheitsmuster* is no exception in this sense, but the function of this self-reflexiveness is not aesthetic nor experimental. In *Kindheitsmuster* with its layer upon layer of chronological time and narrative consciousness; the story of Nelly and her family which contains most of the plot and action as such, and the account of the narrator's forty-six hour visit to Landsberg provide the temporal and poetic foundation for the contemporary layer of time, which contains the actual dramatic interest of the novel. The difficulty of authentic memory, of truthfulness to this memory and in living in the present, merge with the difficulty of writing. For this narrator, the problems are manifold:

Im Idealfall sollten die Strukturen des Erlebens sich mit den Strukturen des Erzählens decken. Dies wäre, was angestrebt wird: phantastische Genauigkeit. Aber es gibt die Technik nicht, die es gestatten würde, ein unglaublich verfilztes Geflecht, dessen Fäden nach den strengsten Gesetzen ineinandergeschlungen sind, in die lineare Sprache übertragen, ohne es ernstlich zu verletzen.  

This passage, which begins the thirteenth chapter of *Kindheitsmuster*, most fully illuminates the narrator's attitude towards her material and the attempt to write about it. (In *Kindheitsmuster* and in *Nachdenken über Christa T.*, the structures of experience and narrative correspond remarkably to each other.)
The process of Sich-frei-schreiben as it is conducted and discussed by the narrator, takes up such issues are the writer's responsibility to tell the truth, albeit; "a truth that is bound in many respects"; to take up certain subjects as a kind of moral imperative, before he/she can go on to others.

As asked about the reason for her choice of themes in Kindheitsmuster, Wolf has stated: "Es gibt ja auch gewisse Gesetze der Berufsmoral. Wenn man eine bestimmte Sache noch nicht gesagt hat, darf man nicht zu anderem übergehen." The "bestimmte Sache" which must be dealt with here is the question: "Wie war es möglich, und wie war es wirklich?"55

Wolf's concept of the vocation of the writer is further evident in her statement that: "Irgendwann muss man begreifen, dass man dazu ist, ganz bestimmte Sachen zu sagen." Kindheitsmuster is the author's first attempt at a detailed examination of Nazi Germany. In Nachdenken über Christa T., that period of time leading up to and during the War is referred to as "those days", and described only in afterthought, in images of horror and despair. With reference to Christa T.'s nervous breakdown during that time, the narrator comments: "Der Reiter, hinter dem nichts lag als ein zufällig fest geforener See, fiel tot vom Pferd, als er erfuhr, was er hinter sich hatte. Sie schrie nur, das ist nicht zuviel."

In "Lesen und Schreiben", an essay from 1968, Wolf suggests:

Eimal musste sie geschrieben werden, die sonderbare, sprunghafte Lesegeschichte meiner Generation; vielleicht gäbe sie einen Anhaltspunkt für Unausgeglichenheiten und Unsicherheiten, die nicht leicht zu erklären sind.57

Three years were to pass before the visit to Landsberg which served as catalyst for the writing of Kindheitsmuster.

Lesen und Schreiben purports to be a collection of critical writings on literature: "Essays, Sketches, Memories" - but is largely autobiographical.
Wolf chooses those literary figures whose work bears important affinities with her own, and many times her remarks about a writer or a work, could just as easily apply to her own writing. In her discussion of Fred Wander's *The Seventh Well*, she comments:


Similarly the narrator in *Kindheitsmuster* has achieved the necessary distance from both the events and herself to overcome the antipathy which earlier has prevented an honest attempt to see things 'as they were', and that now allows her to approximate her goal of "phantastische Genauigkeit". Unlike Fred Wanders, however, the "Selbst-Verfremdung" continues for the duration of the book, and while she can say "You" and "Nelly" without meaning only herself, it is only on the last page that she is able to say "I". Even then, as one critic has suggested, it is in connection with the dreamlike nature of existence. She suggests, it is: - "ein Ich das sich seiner Identität keineswegs sicher ist."59

The idea of the writer as a kind of moral rear-guard for a generation is a central concern of the narrator. Times being different, the writer might have enjoyed, as Czesław Miłosz expresses it, the freedom to contemplate being in the world, but suddenly; "all this is negated by demoniac doings of History, which acquires the traits of a bloodthirsty Deity."60
In "Der Beruf des Dichters", Elias Canetti tells of an anonymous jotting, dated August 23, 1939, which he came across, quite by chance. It states:

Es ist aber alles vorüber. Wäre ich wirklich ein Dichter, ich müsste den Krieg verhindern können.

Canetti describes his initial irritation in response to this claim, and his gradual recognition of its actual significance:

Es ist eben dieser irrationale Anspruch auf eine Verantwortung, der mich hier nachdenklich macht und besticht. Es wäre dazu auch zu sagen, dass es durch Worte, bewusst und immer wieder eingesetzte, missbrauchte Worte zu dieser Situation gekommen ist, in der der Krieg unvermeidlich wurde. Wenn durch Worte soviel auszurichten ist – warum lässt es sich nicht durch Worte verhindern. Es ist gar nicht zu wundern, dass jemand, der mehr als andere mit Worten umgeht, von ihrer Wirkung auch mehr erwartet als andere.61

Thirty years after the fact, the writer's responsibility is no longer prevention, but description and reclamation. The War and the Nazi regime being a historical reality, the writer, Wolf claims, now has the duty to describe what has happened during those years, in words that are still tinged with inhuman shades.

Steiner states, in 1959, with reference to the death of the German language:

Everything forgets. But not a language. When it has been injected with falsehood, only the most drastic truth can cleanse it.62

Perhaps Wolf envisions part of her (the writer's) task to be precisely that – to rescue language itself from its own "Verfallen"; to cleanse it through the fire of drastic "truth". Again I would like to point out the narrator's tremendous interest in words: their origins, etymologies, constituent elements,
applications, and misuses; in the attempt to determine whether there remains the possibility of using them in a new and truthful way. The difficulty that the writer encounters in writing because he must confront his contemporaries with the important moral issues of the time is evident not only in the narrator's task, but in most of the literary references in Kindheitsmuster. The narrator reads and is repeatedly intrigued by writers known personally or through their works, who share the dilemma of attempting to cope with things of the past or present through writing. Although Kindheitsmuster offers the most expansive investigation of this attempt, it is a central motif in all of Wolf's works.

In Nachdenken über Christa T., the narrator reflects and thinks back upon the life of a friend, who was also a writer of sorts. She attempts to cope with the death of this friend by means of re-creating her life in narrative. The effect of her death upon the narrator is extremely powerful. In addition to being a close friend of the narrator, Christa T. lived an unexampled life. She was an individual in a time when one was encouraged to identify oneself with a stamp that was supposed to "say it all" about oneself. The circumstances of her life; the cruel irony that she should be stricken with a disease for which, as both she and the narrator realize, there would likely be a cure within a matter of years, just as she has begun to realize what would be her own way of living in the world, dictate that the narrator must find a way to live with "einem dummen, bösen, sinnlosen Zufall".

Das Vermächtnis einer - wenn es nur mit rechten Dingen zugangen wäre - Lebenden auf den Hals zu haben, schien mir damals ein besonderer Unglücksfall....

The need and the obligation to rescue this important life from oblivion, is the driving force behind the narrative. "Denn es scheint, wir brauchen sie"; the narrator concludes.
Not surprisingly, the story of Christa T. is that of a young woman who manages to live, literally, by writing. Writing is therapy; a way of understanding, a means of securing a foothold in the world; "dichtzumachen die schöne, helle, feste Welt"; of coming to terms with things, of mediating reality, of saying what cannot be said to one’s satisfaction in daily life. Christa T. is one of Wolf's most dramatic examples of an individual's need, "schreibend über die Dinge [zu] kommen."\(^4\)

Significant also is Christa T.'s choice of topic for her thesis in the field of literature; the writer Theodor Storm:

Weil sein Weltverhältnis "vorwiegend lyrisch" ist und weil eine solche Natur, in eine von Niedergangstendenzen und Epigonentum gezeichnete Zeit gestellt, besondere Anstrengungen nötig hat, um dennoch ihr Werk hervorzubringen. Diese Anstrengungen sind es also. Nicht, dass sie das Werk überschätzte, aber sie schätzt, dass es dennoch zustande kam.... Aber er hat, was er immerhin besitzt, wirklich erobert, und unter welchen Bedingungen!

The thesis becomes as much an assertion of her affinity with the writer as an explication of his work. While reading the thesis, after Christa T.'s death, the narrator is surprised:

Auf mitgehendes Verständnis, auf Bekenntnisse war ich nicht gefasst, noch weniger auf Selbstprüfung und fast unverhüllte Selbstdarstellung, auf den Einbruch persönlicher Problematik in die leidenschaftlose Untersuchung.\(^6\)

Having completed her thesis, Christa T. reluctantly submitted it to the institute as required, and there is not even a copy to be found among her things, evidence again that what was crucial to her was the process of writing itself, rather than a finished written product.
Individuelle Geschichtserfahrung, niedergelegt im fiktionalen Text, kann gelesen werden als Korrektur und Kontrast zur historiographischen Geschichtsdeutung, die solche private Erfahrung weitgehend vernachlässigt.66

Marie-Luise Linn suggests that one can read Kindheitsmuster as an alternative approach to understanding history - the history that is recorded in textbooks, and is not concerned with individuals. The story that the narrator relates is however more than a personal "slice of history". She feels compelled to get behind mere facts, which sometimes serve to hide the truth. She is perhaps not as much concerned with an alternate account of the meaning of the events themselves, as with confronting individuals with knowledge that is too easily forgotten, and in identifying the traces of past experience that still exist within.

Wenn über eine alte Geschichte endlich Gras gewachsen ist, dann kommt bestimmt ein junges Kamel, das es wieder runterfrisst. (Schnäuzchen-Oma to Liesbeth.)67

Christa Wolf, in 1976:

Tatsächlich möchte ich das Vergessen schwieriger machen. ...Ich bin hier das Kamel, dass das Gras von dieser alten Geschichte runterfrisst - mit voller Absicht.68

Perhaps Wolf is concerned not so much with the lapse of history into legend and lies, as its lapse into irrelevance.

Der Krieg ist trotz allem bis heute etwas nicht Ausgeklärtes oder nicht genügend Besprochenes. Wir sind übereingekommen, über ein gewisses Bild des Krieges, in einem gewissen Stil vom Kriege zu schreiben oder ihn zu verdammnen, doch fühlt man darin irgendein Verschweigen, ein Vermeiden jener Dinge, die immer wieder eine seelische Erschütterung verursachen.69

The ethically-engaged writer, Wolf suggests, is constantly faced with the dual obligation to write and to act; 'beobachten und handeln'. In
Nachdenken über Christa T. The dilemma becomes a serious source of despair to Christa T. The impossibility of reconciling the two causes her to consider suicide. In a letter to her sister, which is never sent, she writes:


Christa T.'s situation is portrayed as that of a sensitive and gifted individual who lacks "Anpassungsfähigkeit" and the hardness required to live in a period of drastic transition and accommodation.

The situation of the narrator in Kindheitsmuster is not so dramatic and the dilemma is diffused into various component questions:

Muss nicht der Berichterstatter zögern, eine Vergangenheit von sich abzutrennen, die in ihm selbst noch arbeiten mag, die noch nicht fertig ist, daher nicht beherrschbar?

Upon receiving news of the Israeli-Egyptian conflict in 1973, the narrator is unable to go on writing:

Die Gewohnheit, täglich ein Stück Text auf weisse Seiten zu schreiben, war in Frage gestellt.

She dreams that she is an unwilling accomplice to the torture of an old man, and feels herself: "gelähmt, festgelegt auf die Beobachterrolle"; unable to come to his aid. Upon awaking, the meaning of the dream is clear to her:

Aber wo beginnt die verfluchte Pflicht des Aufschreibers der, ob er will oder nicht, Beobachter ist, sonst schrieb er nicht, sondern kämpfte oder stürbe –, und wo endet sein verfluchtes Recht?... O Über diese Zeit, da der Schreibende, ehe er zur Beschreibung fremder Wunden übergehen darf, die Wunde seines eigenen Unrechts vorweisen muss.
In her Büchner-Prize Acceptance Speech of October, 1980, Christa Wolf says that she is "disturbed more than ever by the deep complexity of writing and living, of responsibility and guilt, which molds and likewise threatens to destroy anyone who writes by living and lives by writing."\(^{72}\)

The tension produced by the continual pull between living and writing prompts the afore-mentioned dream, through which the narrator realizes; "dass du vorerst nicht weiterarbeiten konntest." As she wanders through the streets, she discovers:

\[
\text{Die Freude über die wiedererlangte Fähigkeit zu sehen mischt sich mit der Bedrückung über die Unmoral dieses Berufes: Dass man nicht leben kann, während man leben beschreibt. Dass man leben nicht beschreiben kann, ohne zu leben.}\(^{73}\)
\]

The conflict between observation and participation, reflection and action, between reporter and actor - is mirrored in the danger of confusing literature with life. George Steiner states in *Language and Silence*:

The capacity for imaginative reflex, for moral risk in any human being is not limitless; on the contrary, it can be rapidly absorbed by fictions, and thus the cry in the poem may come to sound louder, more urgent, more real than the cry in the street outside. The death in the novel may move us more potently than the death in the next room....\(^{74}\)

The seriousness of writing to ensure her survival is evident in Wolf's dialogue with an anonymous interviewer, 1976. To the question - "Ist die Vergangenheit zu bewältigen?" - she replies:

\[
\text{Nein. Sechs Millionen ermordeter Juden sind nicht zu bewältigen...}
\]

\[
\text{Zuruf: Hat denn das Schreiben darüber einen Sinn?}
\]

\[
\text{Christa Wolf: ...Für mich hat es einen Sinn. Ich will ja auch noch weiterleben. Ich lebe nicht nur bis heute.}\(^{75}\)
The extravagant demand made upon the writer by the events of this century, to cope with material of inhuman proportions, and the impossibility of "having prevented" the past - in the sense of Canetti's diarist who was unable, as a writer, to prevent the war - do not make the writer's attempt to dent the darkness any less crucial or indispensable. In facing the darkest deed of humanity in her own time - genocide, and not only that committed in Nazi Germany - the writer earns for herself, her place on earth. (Günderrode and Kleist in Kein Ort, Nirgends, on the contrary, each in some way out of step with the times, cannot break enough human ground ever to feel that the earth is really home for them, and each commits suicide.)

In an earlier interview (1973) Wolf explains:

Eine Grundlust und eine Garantie dafür, dass ich immer weiter schreiben werde, ist wahrscheinlich die Erfahrung dass ich mir auf diese Weise am ehesten den mir gemässen Lebensraum schaffe.

Similarly in an interview with Hans Kaufman she states:

Es ist ein grosses Thema, den Reifeprozess dieser meiner Generation zu verfolgen, auch die Gründe zu suchen, wenn er ins stocken kam. Für diejenigen, die in der Zeit des Faschismus aufwuchsen, kann es kein Datum geben, von dem ab sie ihn als "bewältigt" erklären können.

She adds, concerning the advantage that the artist has over the scientist today: "dass seine Arbeit an seine Person gebunden ist, und von keinem anderen gemacht werden kann." The personal vision of the artist is seen by Wolf as having contributed to humanity in a way that science has not equalled.

Asked about the wisdom of aspiring towards impossible goals and thus endangering one's mental health, Wolf states:
...Ich meine, man kann auch schreiben, wenn man krank ist. Um gesund zu werden. Schreiben kann auch eine Therapie sein... Denn ich glaube nicht, dass das Aussprechen von Krankmachenden Sachverhalten zerstört, sondern dass es heilt....

Freud has written in "The Technique of Psycho-Analysis":

It is the analyst's task constantly to tear the patient out of his menacing illusion and to show him again and again that what he takes to be new real life is a reflection of the past.

Substitute "narrator" for analyst, and "protagonist" and "reader" for patient, and this could be an apt statement about Kindheitsmuster as well.

Wolf's concept of writing as therapy serves, through processes similar to those of psychoanalysis, to uncover, reclaim, decipher, and interpret past experience. Like the psychoanalyst who takes his patient into layers of experience and consciousness underlying the observable exterior, Wolf chooses to explore rather than bury, the fearsome subterranean chambers of the soul and psyche, and to examine the relationship of past and present existence:

Es geht doch darum, dass wir immer tiefere Schichten des Bewusstseins freilegen, und dass wir die Grenzen dessen, was die Gesellschaft von sich weiss, aber auch, was ich von mir weiss, immer weiter hinausschieben. Das ist anstrengend, aber auch befreiend.

To compare the writing of Kindheitsmuster with an extended period of psychoanalysis is not mere metaphor. The process of writing the book (for Wolf) and of telling the story (for the narrator), prompted at one level by a strong moral impulse, constitute also an act of self-healing. (The narrator achieves it within the text; Christa Wolf, outside the text.)

Like the process of undergoing psychoanalysis, the telling of the story can not be accelerated or rushed. The narrator has, in the first
chapter, a premonition that this project would require: "eine lange Zeit von Arbeit und Zweifel." Unlike a story of less complex structure and plot, and less intensely personal substance, the narrator works with her material as she is ready to; as she brings new ground into consciousness and to articulation. The writing of Kindheitsmuster takes approximately two and one half years. As with psychoanalysis, the story incorporates the subject of its own progress into itself: there is often a cumulative progression from one chapter to the next and there are frequent intra textual references. The telling of the final chapter is made possible only by the soul-searching and the insights accomplished in the preceding ones.

Perhaps the most obvious example of this is the beginning of the fifteenth chapter, where the narrator gives an account of several reactions to a public reading of what was to become the eleventh chapter, in Switzerland. A male contemporary asks her: "Ob die Literaten nicht endlich aufhören sollten mit der Pflichtübungen Auschwitz, um statt dessen der Jugend die feineren Methoden und Gefahren des Faschismus näherrzubringen." The narrator promises herself and a Jewish man in the audience:

Dort, wo du lebst, hatte niemand die Erwähnung von Auschwitz öffentlich als "Pflichtübungen" bezeichnen können. \(^\text{82}\)

(Jack Zipes mentions also that two chapters of Kindheitsmuster were published separately in Text und Kritik (1975) and Sinn und Form (1976) before completion of the novel.)\(^\text{83}\)

Marie-Luise Linn, in "Doppelte Kindheit", suggests that in Kindheitsmuster:

(So) wird die epische Fiktion einer Psycho-Analyse der Du-Figur aufgebaut, eine Fortsetzung der, Christa T. insofern, als das Nach-Denken hier dem eigenen, durch
The narrator stands in relation to her distanced and fictionalized self - Nelly - and to her past-in-present self - the "Du-Figur" as the psychoanalyst to his patient. She has the powers of provocation, articulation, interpretation, and to some extent, of objectivity, that her past selves, notably Nelly, lacked, and subsequently suffered from.

Freud speaks of the pact made between psychoanalyst and patient as the promise of the patient's "complete candour" in exchange for the analyst's assistance in regaining "mastery over lost provinces of his mental life":

He is to tell us not only what he can say intentionally and willingly, what will give him relief like a confession, but everything else as well that his self-observation yields him, everything that comes into his head, even if it is disagreeable for him to say it, even if it seems to him unimportant or actually nonsensical...he will present us with a mass of material - thoughts, ideas, recollections - which are already subject to the influence of the unconscious, which are often its direct derivatives, and which thus put us in a position to conjecture his repressed unconscious material .... (Freud's emphasis)

Similarly, the narrator calls upon her past self to yield up experience - as detailed and as authentic as possible, which she will then grapple with, interpret, and synchronize with the biographical outlines of her life's story. Where the psychoanalyst however, gains the patient's trust in part, precisely as a result of his promise not to judge, the narrator of Kindheitsmuster takes a relentless and judicial approach to earlier thoughts, and actions committed in the past. One of the ways in which she attempts to make peace with herself is precisely in the apportioning of guilt, responsibility and innocence.

What do psychoanalysis and writing, as described in Kindheitsmuster, have in common? Both are greatly concerned with, and investigate, the workings
of the Unconscious:

...processes and tendencies in mental life, of which we know nothing; have, for a very long time, perhaps even never, known anything about at all.

...a special realm, with its own desires and modes of expression and peculiar mental mechanisms not elsewhere operative.86

Freud provides a spatial illustration of the Unconscious as, "a large anteroom in which the various mental excitations are crowding upon one another, like individual beings." There is a doorkeeper who checks whatever threatens to pass across the threshold into consciousness, and allows certain excitations to pass through, and turns back certain others which are then "incapable of becoming conscious; we call them repressed."87 (Freud's emphasis)

To get past the doorkeeper standing guard at the gates of consciousness, is a common aim of the psychoanalyst and the narrator of Kindheitsmuster. Wolf quotes a line (anonymously) from Schiller: "Die Wächter vor den Toren des Bewusstseins abziehen."

After one of the frequent sleepless nights brought on by the trauma of her undertaking, the narrator realizes:

...dass du die Erinnerung, dies Betrugssystem, zu fürchten, dass du, indem du sie scheinbar vorzeigst, in Wirklichkeit gegen sie anzugehen hast....Was die Zensur passiert, sind Präparate, Einschlüsse, Fossilien mit einem furchtbaren Mangel an Eigentümlichkeit. Fertigteile, deren Herstellungszprozess – an dem du, wie du nicht leugnen wirst, beteiligt bist – zur Sprache gebracht werden muss.88

The narrator attempts to relive past experience, to reconstruct past time, and in the act of aesthetic re-creation – to imagine other options: in the form of imaginary conversations between people who never met, possible variations of interchanges known to have happened, and possible alternate
endings to stories which ended badly.

Psychoanalysis and writing contain a paradox in their common objective of remembering incidents, which when they happened, had to be buried or repressed so that the patient/protagonist might go on living. They also share the difficult task of restoring a continuity between event and emotion which was severed earlier. For the narrator of Kindheitsmuster, on both the conscious and unconscious levels, there are "writer's blocks", which she can occasionally identify, even while not necessarily recognizing their origin:

Widerstände in mir sind, wirklich das herauszufinden, wonach der Stoff drängt. Denn natürlich hat man beim Schreiben auch Angst vor dem, was herauskommen wird. Niemand setzt freiwillig Angst frei. Dass muss man aber, indem man bis an die Grenze des Stoffes geht. Bück-sichts-los sein (ohne Sicht zurück) als eine der Überlebensbedingungen; als eine der Voraussetzungen, die Lebende von Überlebenden trenn.89

The narrator alludes to the Old Testament account of Lot's wife who disobeyed the order not to turn and look back at the falling city, and was changed instantly into a pillar of salt. In order to live in those times, she suggests, one had to keep one's eyes firmly ahead.90 The narrator summarizes the task which fell to her generation: "Niemals haben Menschen so vieles vergessen sollen, um funktionsfähig zu bleiben, wie die, mit denen wir leben." The paradox lies in the fact that an action which once made one's survival possible, that of wilful forgetting, has now to be reversed. The greater her success at forgetting in the past, the more difficult the task of retrieval in the present.

Amazed at her inability to identify her own feelings upon returning to her former home town, the narrator lies awake at night and realizes:
In dieser Nacht in der fremden Stadt mit ihren fremdsprachigen Geräuschen begreifst du, dass die Gefühle sich rächen, die man sich verbieten muss, und verstehst bis ins einzelne die Strategie, die sie anwenden: Wie sie, indem sie selbst scheinbar zurückziehen, benachbarte Empfindungen mit sich nehmen. Nun verbietet sich schon nicht mehr nur die Trauer, das Weh - auch Bedauern ist nicht mehr zugelassen und, vor allem, die Erinnerung. Erinnerung an Heimweh, Trauer, Bedauern. Die Axt an der Wurzel. (My emphasis)

(In psychoanalytic investigation it is similarly possible to determine a point at which the events of an individual's life, and the emotions they provoke, no longer have a causal connection; where a sense of numbness becomes the individual's characteristic state of existence.)

The narrator comments: "Dahin, für immer dahin ist die schöne freie Ent sprechung der Gefühle mit den Vorgangen. Auch das wäre, recht bedacht, ein Grund zur Trauer." This 'disconnection' evolves into a kind of inner alienation; "whose very tracks consisted in the effacement of all tracks. A person who wants to pass unnoticed soon stops noticing anything." 91

R.D. Laing writes, concerning "The inner self in the schizoid condition," in The Divided Self:

...temporary states of dissociation of the self from the body occur in normal people. In general, one can say that it is a response that appears to be available to most people who find themselves enclosed within a threatening experience from which there is no physical escape.92

The disparity between observation and information, the deliberate disconnection between events and the emotions they elicited, the energy required for continual denial of the heart's and body's intuitions; all of these exact their toll in emotional suffering. In order to preserve some sense of the rationality and intelligibility of her own behaviour, Nelly develops a tendency to "split in two" - one half of which does what is demanded of her, the other
"beobachtet sie alle und sich selbst von der Zimmerecke her und durchschaut alles."

So sprach ein Teil von Nelly zu dem anderen Teil, denn es war ihr zur Gewohnheit geworden, sich selbst laufen und reden und handeln zu sehen.... Es hinderte sie oft daran, von der Leber weg zu reden oder durchzugreifen, wo es nötig gewesen wäre....

And again: Sie, unbewegter Beobachter, wirft einen undurchdringlichen Schatten auf sich, der, wie sich zeigen soll, schwerer auflösbar ist als die blassen huschenden Schatten der feindlichen Flieger über sie hinweg....

The night that her family packs up for the second time, to flee from the Soviet army, marks the crisis point in Nelly's young life:

Wenn Nelly irgendwann in der Gefahr schwebte, den Boden unter den Füssen zu verlieren, dann in jener Nacht. Verzweiflung wäre der Ausdruck nicht, verzweifeln zu können, bedeutet, man hängt mit der Ursache der Verzweiflung zusammen: Nelly hing mit nichts mehr zusammen.93

Nelly has reached the lowest rung in a spiral of untruths, denial and suffering. This division allows her to maintain some measure of distance, and to keep a part of herself intact, in essence - to survive.

(I do not wish to stretch the comparison of psychoanalysis and the process of writing, but it is a not uncommon occurrence that an individual who lives in an intolerable situation will compartmentalize his existence and his "self" to the point of creating several distinct personalities co-existing within himself: "Multiple personalities" - a kind of schizophrenic disorder. The object of the analyst working with such an individual, is to re-unify, to synchronize, to restore harmony and unity to the shattered fragments, whether these exist as separate personalities, or as an inner and outer self, as in Nelly's case.)

Elsewhere the narrator stipulates:

Erschöpfen von ausschöpfen?...Der Endpunkt wäre erreicht, wenn zweite und dritte Person wieder in der ersten zusammen trafen, mehr noch: zusammenfielen. Wo nicht mehr "du" und "sie" - wo unverhohlen "ich" gesagt werden müsste.

A detailed analysis of the dream content in *Kindheitsmuster* would doubtless prove very interesting, in particular, the symbolic and aesthetic expression which her dreams give to the narrator's long-lost memories and unsuspected fears. The "White Ship" episode is one example of how the mind preserves temporal and symbolic relationships over a long period of time.

Finally, writing as therapy serves the narrator as a form of catharsis and exorcism - as a means of dispelling fear and ghosts, and of giving formal expression to grief. *Kindheitsmuster* is, as Peter Beicken and Rolf J. Goebel have suggested, a working out of sorrow:

Literature als die grosse Rechtfertigung, warum es Hoffnung geben muss und nicht nur Wissen und Verzweiflung an der Schuld: Christa Wolf lässt hier ihr Schreiben als ein Stück persönlicher Trauerarbeit erkennen.
FOOTNOTES


3 Wolf, Nachdenken über Christa T., p. 83; (hereafter cited as Nachdenken).

4 Wolf, Kindheitsmuster, p. 17.

5 Ibid., p. 317.

6 Christine Cosentino, "Eine Untersuchung des Sozialistischen Realismus im Werke Christa Wolfs" in German Quarterly, 47, 1974, pp. 246, 247.

7 Kein Ort, Nirgends and Cassandra, which was published by Sammlung Luchterhand this Spring, 1983, are novels of a different order, I believe. While Kein Ort Nirgends, and Cassandra as well I suspect, contain many autobiographical elements; Wolf re-creates in both novels, the story of an actual historical figure. Karoline von Gunderrode and Cassandra of Troy were both visionary women, alien to and rejected by their particular time and society. Both came to violent ends; Karoline at her own hands, and Cassandra, slain by Clytemnestra. Wolf aligns their difficulties with those confronting her various autobiographical narrators, and continues the dialogue between past and present, but leaves the historical figures in their original contexts.

8 Zipes, p. xvi.


10 Cosentino, p. 247.
Zipes, pp. xxx, xxxi; Christa Wolf, asked to give an opinion of her earlier work, comments in 1973: "Ich habe früher Texte geschrieben die ich heute anders schreiben würde....Es handelt sich [von]...die von einer gewissen damals verbreiteten Einstellung zur Literatur ausgingen, von einer unschöpferischen, rein ideologierenden Germanistik." (Meinetwege Schmetterlinge, p. 129)

Wolf, Divided Heaven, p. 1; Because Der Geteilte Himmel was not available, I have quoted from the English translation.

Ibid., pp. 10, 35, 39.

Wolf, Nachdenken, p. 64.


Wolf, Kindheitsmuster, pp. 193, 141.

Wolfgang Emmerich, "Der Kampf um die Erinnerung" in Christa Wolf Materialienbuch, pp. 114, 115. (Hereafter cited as Materialienbuch.)

Wolf, Kindheitsmuster, pp. 192, 193.

Ibid., pp. 12, 13.

Peter Beicken and Rolf J. Goebel, "Erzählerische Selbstverständigung: Christa Wolf zwischen Moderne und Tradition" in Monatshefte, 74, No. 1, p. 69.

Ivan Klima also takes up the "book within a book" theme, but does not explore the process of writing as Wolf does.

Wolf, Kindheitsmuster, pp. 47, 86.

Wolf, in "Diskussion mit Christa Wolf" in Materialienbuch, p. 35.


28 Wolf, Nachdenken, p. 82.

29 Wolf, Kindheitsmuster, p. 31.

30 Ibid., Inscription.

31 Beicken and Goebel, p. 68.

32 Patricia Merivale, "The Search for the Other Woman: Female Artist - Parables in the Seventies", (unpublished paper, delivered at The University of British Columbia, 1982), pp. 6, 7.

33 Wolf,

34 Wolf, in Materialienbuch, p. 36.


36 Ibid., p. 407.

37 The German language perhaps significantly contains phrases which concisely and forcefully express an idea for which there is perhaps no equivalent English expression. Among these is the idea of "Sich-frei-schreiben; literally, writing oneself free or freeing oneself through writing from whatever it is that holds one captive; whether the burden of words themselves, or past experience which has never been given due attention. The narrator in Kindheitsmuster also modifies this as "Sich-frei-sprechen": to speak oneself free.

Another similar concept which is more suggestive in German is that of "weiter leben" and "weiter schreiben"; literally, to live on, to go on living and to go on writing. In the context that Wolf uses them however, they evoke
the sense of a possibility which is not to be taken for granted, but depends on its own particular set of prerequisites. Because the German words are more evocative, I will use the German with quotation marks.

38 Wolf in Materialienbuch, p. 39.
39 Wolf, Kindheitsmuster, pp. 415, 60, 317.
40 Ibid., p. 9.
41 Ibid., pp. 9, 10, 180.
42 Ibid., pp. 214, 215.
43 Wolf, in Materialienbuch, p. 48.
44a Wolf, Kindheitsmuster, p. 17.
44b Ibid., pp. 48, 169.
46 Beicken and Goebel, p. 70.
47 Wolf, Kindheitsmuster, p. 73.
48 Ibid., pp. 71, 301.
49 Ibid., p. 262.
50 Ibid., pp. 177, 417, 418.
51 George Steiner, (in Language and Silence) addresses this matter in an essay entitled "The Hollow Miracle", in which he writes about the three years of facing the truth in Germany, before the "economic miracle" brought with it a new myth:

Millions of Germans began saying to themselves and to any foreigner gullible enough to listen that the past had somehow not happened, that the horrors had been grossly exaggerated by Allied propaganda and sensation-mongering journalists, Yes, there were some concentration camps, and reportedly a number of Jews and other unfortunates were exterminated. (More than Emil Dunst or the taxi-driver were willing to concede.) "But not six million, lieber Freund, nowhere near that many. That's just propaganda, you know....And really, on the
Eastern Front our boys were not up against normal human beings. The Russians: are mad dogs, lieber Freund, mad dogs!...Wherever one travelled in Germany, one heard such arguments. The Germans themselves began believing them with fervor. (Language and Silence, p. 106-7; His emphasis)

Steiner examines the effect of this myth on Germany, a decade later (in 1959) and summarizes that prevalent attitude as follows:

Forget the past. Work. Get prosperous. The new Germany belongs to the future....Why rake up the past?..."Let us forget" is the litany of the new German age. Even those who cannot, urge others to do so. (p. 108)

It is this mentality, in addition to her personal quest for answers, that causes Christa Wolf, over a decade later, to create a different sort of litany - a litany of sorrow and remembering.

Hamida Bosjamian introduces her analysis of "Contemporary German Literature and the Shadow of Naziism" with the question: "Why deny the obvious necessity of memory?" (Marguerite Duras, Hiroshima Mon Amour).

The author's personal involvement in her material is evident from the beginning. She describes Metaphors of Evil as: "an analytical and critical attempt to determine the impact of the Nazi era on the literary imagination ...grounded in the critic's personal memory, in her living as well as intellectual experiences", and states:

The Nazi era was no hiatus in our civilization, was no transcendent atrocious time: it was our time. From the vantage point of an ephemeral present moment, we presume to overlook the years 1933-1945, overlook them in the sense of overseeing and neglecting. Blind to the significance of the present moment and living in the illusion of reprieve, we circle the casual rounds of daily existence. We can do this because we repress the memory or possibility of such an extreme situation...our memory and our fumbling, always inadequate, self-awareness must work together lest we forget and repeat. (Metaphors of Evil, pp. xi, xii.)
Christa Wolf and George Steiner, with very different life experiences, in particular, of the war, strike me as remarkably similar with regard to their concerns in writing. The work of both demonstrates a deeply serious and intensely moral tone, especially as concerns the writer's, and also the literary critic's responsibility in the aftermath of Auschwitz. George Steiner says of contemporary human beings: "We come after....We are post-Auschwitz homo sapiens." (Language and Silence, p. 158). While Christa Wolf is implicated in her material by virtue of having been a child during World War II years, Steiner writes as one who might have been a concentration camp victim himself. Both write extremely poetic prose, and both have very clear ideas on the function of the literary critic, which, they suggest, in this age is more crucial than ever, and which depends, in Steiner's words, on "the exacting freshness of personal encounter." (Language and Silence, p. 53)

They share a common insistence that Auschwitz - as symbol for all the
Nazi atrocities - must be a central awareness in the poet's consciousness. Steiner recounts how, when he was asked about his frequent references to concentration camps, his response was that they are "profoundly relevant". Both stress "the obvious necessity of memory" and are gravely concerned with the possibility that the Holocaust could happen again; in fact, that the evils of the past will, and do, repeat themselves if they are not given the requisite importance and attention. (Steiner speaks of the "miracle of amnesia" which has been accomplished in post-War Germany.)

Language and silence: language as the "vessel of human grace and the prime carrier of civilization"; and silence as perhaps the final recourse in the face of an unspeakable reality: this is a recurring refrain in both Steiner's and Wolf's writing.

The notion of time - its "Vielschichtigkeit" and the notions of different orders of time - are also motifs common to both. Wolf looks at four diaries of contemporary individuals living within a small area, written in the same decade, and is amazed at the irreconcilable differences. Among them is the diary of a young Jewish boy living in a village near Warsaw during the War. "Das vorletzte Wort - jedenfalls in der deutschen Übersetzung - heisst: Blut. Das letzte - Dawidek hat es nicht mehr aufschreiben können - müsste Tod heissen. Genauer: Mord." (Lesen und Schreiben, p. 62). The second diary contains a detailed account of a butterfly caught by the diarist, reminiscent somehow of Nabokov's account in Speak Memory, and prompts the narrator to ask: "Ist es unbillig, auszusprechen, dass David Rabinowicz' Tagebuch solche Zeilen in Un-Natur verwandelt? Obwohl das eine vom anderen nichts weiss?" (p. 65). She wonders: "Wieviel Schichten hat die Zeit? Wieviel Möglichkeiten, in ihr zu leben?" (p. 62).

Steiner states:
One of the things I cannot grasp, though I have often written about them, trying to get them into some kind of bearable perspective, is the time relation...Precisely at the same hour in which Mehring or Langner were being done to death, the overwhelming plurality of human beings, two miles away on the Polish farms, five thousand miles away in New York, were sleeping or eating or going to a film or making love or worrying about the dentist. This is where imagination balks. (Language and Silence, p. 156)

Steiner ponders whether there are in fact; "different species of time in the same world, 'good times', and enveloping folds of inhuman time, in which men fall into the slow hands of living damnation." (p. 156).

Wolf and Steiner also share a common interest in the relationship of the victim and the survivor.

64 Wolf, Nachdenken, pp. 229, 97, 9, 27, 44.
65 Ibid., pp. 120, 121.
66 Linn, p. 63.
67 Wolf, Kindheitsmuster, p. 42.
68 Wolf, in Materialienbuch, p. 38.
69 Wolf,
70 Wolf, Nachdenken, p. 91.
71 Wolf, Kindheitsmuster, pp. 112, 200, 201; This dream is unusual by revealing in images, the narrator's need to halt her writing temporarily, and return to life. Most of the accounts of dreams, on the contrary, reveal some aspect of the fear of writing, and the danger of breaking the silence. Wolf comments: "Es kommen viele Träume vor in diesem Buch, in der Zeit in der man an einem derartigen Stoff arbeitet, da träumt man nicht gut, klar. Es wird Angst frei, von der man gar nicht gewusst hat, dass sie noch da ist...."
(Materialienbuch, p. 42.)

Wolf, Kindheitsmuster, pp. 355, 356.

Steiner, p. 61

Wolf, in Materialienbuch, pp. 41, 42; The concept of "Vergangenheitsbewältigung" perhaps even more than that of "Sich-frei-schreiben" exists as such only in the German language. While it seems that everyone presumes to understand its meaning, there is no standard definition of the term. It is not even clear whether it carries positive or negative connotations; whether "overcoming the past" is a danger, or an achievement. "To come to terms with the past" could mean to investigate and understand it, to find one's own place in it, to accept responsibility and guilt, and finally, to "have done with it." The term has been invented for a specific time and place: post-War Germany.

Steiner states: "Genocide is the ultimate crime because it preempts on the future, because it tears up one of the roots from which history grows. There can be no meaningful forgiveness because there can be no repair." (Language and Silence, p. 164).

Wolf, in Meinetwegen Schmetterlinge, p. 124.


Wolf, in Meinetwegen Schmetterlinge, pp. 124, 125.


Wolf, in Meinetwegen Schmetterlinge, p. 125.

Wolf, Kindheitsmuster, pp. 31, 360, 361.

Zipes, p. xxx.
Linn, p. 56.

Freud, p. 31.


Ibid., p. 249.


The story of the fall of Sodom and Gomorrah is obviously significant for the narrator as she comes back to it in the rhetorical question: "Oder reicht eine einzige Familie aus, eine ganze Stadt zu retten? Fünf Gerechte auf fünfzigtausend?" Nearing the end of her story, she reflects on the amount of time and energy that has gone into its telling, and the dangers met, recognized only in retrospect, and ponders: "Wer hat wissen können, dass es daraufkommen würde, im Rückblick nicht zur Salzsaule, nicht zu Stein zu erstarren."


Ibid., pp. 192.

Beicken and Goebel, p. 70.
The Portion

When injustice
is carved into many slices
how thin must that slice be
which daily is put on my bread?

Thinner than the glass partition
that separates me from life
than the blade of the blunt knife
that cuts me to pieces

Erich Fried
trans. C. Middleton
CHAPTER TWO

The Impossibility of Justice: Ivan Klima's Der Gnadenrichter

Der Gnadenrichter is a novel of relationships, paradoxes, and degrees. It portrays a man as he stands in relationship to the society in which he lives, in relationship to his wife Alena and his mistress Alexandra; to various other women he has known; to his father, his children, and friends, his profession as a Judge; and finally and most problematically, in relationship to himself. It considers the paradoxical situation of a man who has believed in the existence of justice, yet seen only blatant injustice wherever he looks; who sees himself as called to judge, yet discovers ultimately that he cannot. It is also a novel about degrees of good and evil, guilt and innocence, ignorance and self-deception, of integrity and dissimulation, of personal and public responsibility, of memory and forgetfulness, observation and implication, and perhaps most importantly, the measure of justice and injustice.

This is the story of a man approaching middle age, who looks back and discovers that he has not accomplished what he wanted to in life; who regards the past without any sense of fulfillment and the future without hope or anticipation:

Ganz unlogisch dachte ich, dass ich in ein paar Tagen siebenunddreißig werde und irgendwo im Leben stehe, an einem Punkt, von dem die Menschen wohl zurückblicken, um Bilanz zu ziehen, und nach vorn schauen, um die eigene Zukunft abzuwägen....

\textsuperscript{1}
At the outset, Adam Kindl, the protagonist and partial narrator of Der Gnadenrichter, is satisfied in a mediocre fashion with his life which consists predominantly of his job, his family, a handful of friends, and his secret writing activity. The protagonist, like the author of Der Gnadenrichter, lives in Prague, but cannot publish his work in Czechoslovakia, because his beliefs are not acceptable to the official censors. His early article on capital punishment, and a later essay on Montesquieu, are simultaneously means of expressing his evaluation of contemporary events in his own country.

With the passing years, Adam Kindl has gradually lost all illusions about his profession as well as certainty in other areas of his life. He cannot say whether or not he loves his wife anymore:

Er wusste nicht, ob er seine Frau liebte. In der langen Zeit des Zusammenlebens hatte er sich zwar an sie gewöhnt, war sich seiner Gefühle für sie aber nicht mehr sicher.

Of his daughter alone can he say with assurance that he loves her: "Er hätte gesagt, am meisten liege ihm etwas an seiner Tochter."

The best of his friends, Macek and Petr, live as Adam does himself, outside the circle of official approval. Accused during the course of his interrogation of seeking the company of those forced to leave their positions, Adam replies: "Ich würde eher sagen, dass meine Freunde ihre Posten verlassen mussten." (Klima's emphasis.)

Macek in particular, serves Adam as a kind of moral voice and a combination of alter- and super-ego. He articulates succinctly the nature and implications of decisions which Adam must make, in terminology that commands Adam's respect and loyalty: "Nie teilte er sich jemandem mit (ausgenommen vielleicht Macek), dem er ein besonderes Vertrauen entgegenbrachte fast wie ein Sohn."

2
Although the memory sections - "Bevor wir aus dem Fluss Lethe trinken" - provide the story of Adam's life from his internment as a young boy at Theresienstadt to the age of thirty-seven, the central narrative of this enormous novel spans a surprisingly short period that coincides with the dates of Karel Kozlík's appearance and departure from the life of Adam Kindl. In the first chapter, Kozlík's case has just been brought to Kindl's attention: in the last, Kindl receives a letter with the news that Kozlík has been executed. During the interval, Adam Kindl reconsiders and attempts to evaluate the course of his own life, conducts his first extramarital affair with the wife of a man whom he had once considered a friend, experiences increasing attempts at intimidation by the police, including constant surveillance, and makes his final and fateful professional decision, in full knowledge that it will cost him at the very least, his career.

Der Gnadenrichter creates thematically and structurally, an ambiguous parallel between the lives and fates of Adam Kindl and Karel Kozlík, nominally at least, at opposite ends of the procedure of official justice. Structurally this is evident in the textual interweaving of the two stories; the interruption of Adam Kindl's life and story with fragments of Karel Kozlík's letter of self-defence.

The connection between the two lives is suggested in the first sentence of the novel, in which we learn that Adam Kindl has just received the official "Anklageschrift gegen Karel Kozlík wegen Mordes". It is reinforced immediately thereafter by Adam Kindl's intuition that his own days, like Karel Kozlík's, are numbered:

...Er kannte den Fall und wusste, dass bei heimtückischem Doppelmord für alle nur eine einzige Strafe in Betracht kam, die Höchststrafe: Leben um Leben. Er hätte den Fall eigentlich ablehnen müssen, aber wie? Alle lauerten darauf, dass
In some sense, both men are on reprieve, living under a suspended sentence for breaking the official code of conduct.

Both Kindl and Kozlík have led atypical, if widely different childhoods which have left them, as a result of different experiences, with a sense of lovelessness, inexplicable in Adam's case, which haunts them throughout their adult lives.

As there is only one direct meeting between Adam Kindl and Karel Kozlík, our conception of the latter is a composite constructed from various sources, most significantly his letter to Adam Kindl. His girlfriend claims: "Er hat nichts Schlechtes tun wollen, alle sind gegen ihn gewesen, er hat's nicht mehr ausgehalten." The shadowy criminal figure emerges as a man who never had a chance in life. Rejected at birth by his mother, shuffled back and forth among various places as a child, too early responsible for protecting his stepmother and brothers from an alcoholic father, and suffering vicious headaches as a result of unsuccessful eye surgery, his life thus far has continued in the same strain of hardship, thwarted good intentions, and ensuing embitterment. Kozlík writes that while in prison: "Ich beschloss, Gutes zu tun und nach meiner Entlassung junge Leute zu beeinflussen, damit sie den rechten Weg finden." In and out of prison, more as a result of bad timing than of actual wrongdoing, Kozlík shares with Adam Kindl the experiences of having been imprisoned at an early age, of suffering debilitating illness, and of growing up with virtually absent fathers.

Adam Kindl was separated from his during the long war years and discovered upon their reunion: "Wir gingen einander vorbei, wir wurden in der Zeit, als wir uns hätten finden können, auseinandergerissen und um so vieles
Similarly to Kozlík, Kindl was left with the responsibility for his mother and brother as a youth. His three and a half year internment at Theresienstadt leaves him with a lifelong preoccupation with freedom, and a passion verging perhaps on obsession, with the relationship among justice, power, and guilt. His sense of loneliness too originates after his release from the concentration camp: "Ich hatte keine Zeit, neue Freundschaften anzuknüpfen, und meine alten Freunde waren tot."4

Adam Kindl also aspires to make his life count for something, and his dreams, upon his release from imprisonment, place him constantly in situations where he controls his own destiny of self-esteem and self-ordination. No longer is he at the whim of a power that controls his every move.

The enormity of Karel Kozlík's predicament both magnifies and reflects Adam's own life-situation; the declining status of his marriage, the increasing estrangement from his professional colleagues, the fact that his children are rapidly growing up and he has not taken time to know them. The destinies of both men are bound inextricably with each other, for not only does Kozlík's fate appear to rest on how Kindl judges him, but Kindl's future as well, depends on this fateful decision.

While Adam Kindl is aware of the obvious influence of his decision in the Karel Kozlík case upon his life, he repeatedly intimates a deeper connection between himself and the accused. As he contemplates all those whose dreams like his own, have gone unfulfilled, he reflects upon: "Kozlík, der gleich ihm selbst von guten Taten geträumt hatte, dem jedoch ein freudloses, liebeleeres Leben beschieden war, ein Schicksal, schwerer, als er es ertragen konnte..."
The full extent of their combined destinies however, is not evident until the final pages of the novel. Adam receives simultaneous confirmation of a date for his upcoming surgery, and written notification from Dr. Pravda that Karel Kozlík will have been executed by the time that Adam Kindl receives the letter. Kindl feels an instantaneous physical pain and Macek mistakes the source of his distress. Macek's confusion about the telegram's content heightens the suggestion of intermingled fates.

"Der Kozlík ist wahrscheinlich hingerichtet worden," sagte Adam. "Dieser Mörder, wenn du dich erinnerst."
"Und deshalb schickt man dir ein Telegramm?"

The effect of this statement of course is to suggest, that to the contrary, they have a great deal in common.

Der Gnadenrichter consists of several distinct narrative sub-structures, of which the dominant one is told by a supposedly impartial narrator, and spans an unspecified length of time in the present life of Adam Kindl, Judge of the Law. The memory passages - "Bevor wir aus dem Fluss Lethe trinken" - on the other hand, are narrated in the first person by a character whom we assume, on the basis of biographical coincidence, to be the protagonist of the remainder of the story. They cover Adam Kindl's life from the beginning of the War, over a period of approximately thirty years, to the Russian occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1968. Nowhere is there an explicit cross-reference between the two texts, and there is no attempt made by narrator or protagonist at the end to
bring them together.

On the final page of the novel, Adam Kindl Informs Macek:

"Ich habe versucht, so etwas wie meine Biographie zu verfassen. Weisst du, was interessant ist? Ich kann nicht sagen, ob ich sie geschrieben habe, um mich anzuklagen oder um mich zu verteidigen." 5

These memory passages, chronologically and sequentially ordered, might also constitute in part, the text of Adam Kindl's novel, Der Richter. This would also account for the unexplained gap of three years that falls between the two main narratives. In this case another striking parallel with Christa Wolf's Kindheitsmuster would be evident: the protagonist, like Wolf's unnamed narrator (the adult Nelly), would then in turn become a narrator-writer-author figure.

However, regardless of whether the passages "Bevor wir aus dem Fluss Lethe trinken" comprise the text of Kindl's autobiography or are merely an account of his memories, the authenticity of their narration remains a valid consideration. The narrator, like the narrator in Kindheitsmuster, strives for the greatest possible honesty in recalling his past; amazed alternately by what he remembers and what he has forgotten, and determined not to invent what he does not remember: "ich will aber nichts dazu erfinden." 6 Taken as a truthful account of one man's life in a post-war totalitarian state, these passages provide an interesting sub-version of the history given in the lengthy sections of "Dokumente." The "Dokumente" juxtapose newspaper reportage and excerpts from writings in political philosophy and other sources, with chronicles of "crimes" committed against the government in different eras. The "Altstadter Ring" passages list the death sentences carried out in the heart of Prague throughout centuries. The "Träume und Alpträume" similarly appear as objective third person accounts, and follow the gradual disintegra-
tion of Kindl's great aspirations.

The story of this successful judge who finally decides to step down from the bench because he can no longer confidently pass judgment, let alone the imminently-demanded death-sentence, is told by an omniscient narrator whose voice is frequently the thinly-disguised voice of the author himself.

It is one of the interesting paradoxes of Der Gnadenrichter that while the structure of the novel and of its individual ten chapters is very balanced and symmetrical, the function and identity of the various narrators remain somewhat uncertain and ambiguous. What is certain is that there is a close relationship among three distinct voices evident in the text. There is the voice of the omniscient narrator in the main narrative, who relates the story of Adam Kindl the Judge, and interprets and to some extent evaluates the protagonist's life for the reader. There is the voice of Adam Kindl himself, who presumably relates the events of his life leading up to the time of the present crisis, in the first person, memory passages. And finally, there is the voice of the author himself, perhaps most evident in numerous statements expressing ethical convictions as well as philosophical digressions, within the central narrative. The frequently enraged, injurious, and sorrowful tone is not congruent with the objectivity that we might expect in a third person narrative.

Many statements in Der Gnadenrichter cannot be identified as specifically the narrator's, the protagonist's, or the author's. One example of this indistinction is the claim, in a passage of description and analysis of Adam's personality, that: "Ein Mensch, der sich Selbstmitleid gestattet, war dem Leben ausgeliefert und konnte nichts leisten." The question of the origin of this conviction might well be addressed with one critic's response to Christa Wolf's Nachdenken über Christa T.: "To make a sharp distinction among the three - author, narrator, hero/ine - forcing ironic clashes among them...is no
part of the author's intention."

Another and perhaps more dramatic example is a passage in the final chapter of the novel. Adam Kindl finds himself alone in his cabin, with an unwilling realization of the futility of his life. Alexandra has found a new involvement; Kozlík's fate is out of his hands — and Kindl sees only evidence of his ineffectiveness, in reflecting upon his life. It is one of several major moments of crisis and insight for the protagonist.

The narrative here is interrupted by frequent insistent, passionate, and sorrowful interjections which convey undeniably the author's, as well as the narrator's view of the situation:

Eine Macht, die auf Totalität abzielt, versucht auf jeden widersetzlichen Menschen auszuüben. Unterwirft er sich nicht, dann ist sie bestrebt, ihm das Leben zu erschweren, ihn der Existenzmöglichkeit zu berauben, ihn ins Gefängnis zu werfen, wo ihn verschärfte Bedingungen erwarten, ins Irrenhaus zu stecken oder zumindest an einen Ort abzuschieben, wo ihm jeder Einfluss auf gesellschaftliche Vorgänge genommen ist.

Adam experiences, perhaps for the first time, compassion for all those around him whose aspirations like his own have met with disillusionment.

Again a sorrowful commentator suggests:

So entgleiten uns allmählich unsere Wünsche, unsere Träume brockeln ab, die Ziele, die wir in uns trage, fallen in sich zusammen. Das schlimmste ist, dass wir zum Schluss uns selbst entgleiten und nicht nur auf das eigene Verderben hinarbeiten, sondern auch auf die Vernichtung unserer einmal gesteckten Ziele.

This passage, preceded by the account of Adam Kindl's growing sense of compassion, and followed immediately by Adam's inner resolve not to despair completely, is curiously placed. It is too well articulated and too analytical to be Adam's inner monologue at that particular moment, and suspiciously impassioned and grieving to originate with an objective narrator. Which suggests that it
is the thought of the author himself, who has certainly been in the position of seeing many of his hopes dashed during the events that abruptly ended the Prague Spring.

While the exact identity of the narrator in Der Gnadenrichter remains undefined - (perhaps predominantly being part of a literary constellation to enable the telling of the story) - Ivan Klima endows his protagonist, Adam Kindl, with sufficient similarities to himself, to make him clearly an autobiographical figure.

Adam Kindl, like the author, lives in Prague, and is approaching middle age. (Kindl is approaching forty in the novel, and Klima writes Der Gnadenrichter in his early forties.) Author and protagonist are former members of the Communist Party in Czechoslovakia, and held great hopes for the political and humanist Utopia which they foresaw as the result of an enlightened implementation and development of the new government.

Klima's protagonist, like himself, made the decision to remain in Czechoslovakia at a time when the possibility of a genuine choice still existed. Adam Kindl, like Klima, has strong convictions about the decision to stay rather than emigrate, and like Klima, expends considerable energy defending this decision, which, as we know from other sources, was not easily made by the author.

In personal correspondence with a certain Mr. Spiess, an employee in a German publishing house - (letters written during his stay at the University of Michigan, 1970, when Klima had the option to remain abroad) the author expresses his simultaneous conviction that the future looks bleak for Czechoslovakia, and that he nevertheless has no choice but to return. The letters give some idea, in broken English, of the author's sense of conflict, and of some of the considerations that take him back to his native Prague: "...it is my
country and I have not enough courage to leave it forever...." In another letter, written soon thereafter, (February 12, 1970), Klima writes: "The home, the friends are more important for me than many other things."10

In a subsequent interview with Jiri Lederer in 1976, (Tschechische Gespräche), Ivan Klima states:

Die Emigration hat immer etwas Tragisches. Sie ist wie eine Operation, die den Menschen von etwas trennt - (von seiner Heimat, seiner Muttersprache, seiner Umgebung...).

Discussing the plight of writers in Czechoslovakia, he determines:

Bei uns kann man das Gefühl der Genugtuung sehr stark allein daraus erleben, dass man sich zumindest teilweise seine Authentizität bewahrt hat, dass man nicht dem versklavenden, entpersönlichenden Einfluss der Umgebung und des äusseren Drucks erlag....11

Adam Kindl's convictions about emigration are evident from the beginning of the story: "er wäre sich sein Leben lang wie ein Deserteur vorgekommen." The difference between those who left and those who stayed, Kindl regards as insurmountable:

Und sollte man sich nach Jahren noch einmal widersehen, würde man einander im Grunde nichts mehr zu sagen haben - fremde Menschen.

He despairs of trying to make clear to his father that for him there is reason enough to stay in Czechoslovakia in the possibility that he might be useful:

Er hätte sagen müssen, dass Nützlichkeit sich nicht immer in Tätigkeitskategorien zu äussern braucht. Dass der Mensch sich schon dann nützlich fühlen oder Befriedigung empfinden kann, wenn er einfach ausharrt, jemandem gehört oder auch nur sich selbst, sich unter gewissen Bedingungen seine innere Freiheit bewahrt....
His refusal to join his brother Hanuš in self-imposed exile is for Adam Kindl, as perhaps for Ivan Klima, an act of defiance; a statement of assertion that "They" do not have the right to control who goes and who stays, and whom the land belongs to. Early in the story, Adam comments to his first love, Magdalena: "Die haben einen schon um so vieles gebracht, da schmeisst man ihnen nicht auch noch die Heimat hin." Later, upon his release from the interrogation, he reflects angrily, in a passage which once again sounds distinctly autobiographical:

Und die Unverfrorenheit, ihn zu fragen, warum er nicht ausgereist war! Die taten, als gehörte dieses Land ihnen. Mussten sich das Recht an, zu entscheiden, wer sich als Patriot fühlen durfte!12

The attitude of Klima's protagonist concerning emigration is finally reminiscent of the words of the Russian poet, Anna Akhmatova: "I am not one of those who left the land to the mercy of its enemies."13

Adam Kindl's secret writings expressing alternate moral stances upon state-controlled issues, parallels Ivan Klima's production of literary works, which are published in his own country, only in the Czech samizdat; the Edice Petlice (Padlock series) and Edice Expedice (Dispatch series).

Ivan Klima uses the "book within the book" theme, in Der Gnadenrichter. Similarly to Ivan Klima who has written a variety of articles, Adam Kindl has written various things, ranging from his earliest treatise - "Über den Musterstaat" - to an essay on Montesquieu: "...um seine Gedankengänge über die Unabhängigkeit des Richters zitieren zu können..." - leading up to the work on his novel, Der Richter:

...Vor einiger Zeit hatte er begonnen, ein Buch zu schreiben. Er beabsichtigte, es einfach Der Richter zu nennen und darzulegen, wie zumal in der Alten Welt die konkrete Beteiligung des
Richters an der Rechtausübung zurückgeht und daher auch die individuelle Beurteilung des einzelnen Verbrechens, wie die Angehörigen eines ehemalig geachteten Standes zu Beamten werden, zu blossen Technikern, die dosiert Gesetze berabreichen, über deren Richtigkeit sie sich keine Gedanken zu machen brauchen.14

Kindl's attempt to reveal the absurdity inherent in the official practice of justice in history parallels Klima's citation in the "Dokumente" passages of the novel, of instance upon instance of the injustice and murder that have occurred in the name of justice throughout the ages. The process of writing Der Richter becomes for Adam Kindl, a means of understanding, evaluating, and justifying his life. The nature of Der Gnadenrichter suggests that it has served a similar function for Ivan Klima.

Klima's writings abound with frustrated writer figures whose literary productions never see the light of day in Czechoslovakia. His protagonists, invariably male, regard the act of writing as one of the few important ways in which they can still sound their own voice and perhaps accomplish something worthwhile in the world. The protagonist in Ein Liebessommer, 1973, David Krempa, a predecessor of Adam Kindl, regards writing as a means of warding off the unexplained fear that descends upon him as he stops to reflect upon his life:

Immer wenn ihn diese Angst überfiel, setzte er sich in jähre Panik an den Schreibtisch und holte die protokolle seiner Versuche heraus, auch Sonderdrucke seiner Artikel, er wühlte in den Exzerpten für seine Vorlesungen und sein beabsichtigtes und immer wieder aufgeschobenes Buch, er kramte in seinen Gedanken, um sich wenigstens durch die Fülle von Wörtern, durch die Schwere des Papiers zu überzeugen, dass er etwas aufgespür, dass er wenigstens etwas erreicht hatte.

As he contemplates the course of his life, his thoughts could very well be those of Adam Kindl:
...ich habe eine Frau, aber ich rede kaum mit ihr, ich habe zwei Töchter, aber eigentlich weiss ich nichts von ihnen, ich weiss nichts von der Welt, in der ich mich bewege, und nicht einmal ein Buch habe ich geschrieben.15

But there is the difference, that Kindl, like Klima, does manage to write this book: and this is possibly a crucial difference.

The narrator in Hopfenernte, 1977, falls into a nightmarish, Kafkaesque world, but remembers:

...jene Menschen, welche die Dinge noch beim richtigen Namen nannten, die vielleicht sogar seine Bücher lasen, und über seine Gedanken nachsannen...16

Those occasional exceptions of men who manage to overcome the feeling of thwarted literary ambitions, elicit great respect from Adam Kindl. For Macek, the value of writing does not lie in being widely read:

Der Mensch hat es nötig, das Schweigen zu durchbrechen, mit dem ihn der Kosmos und die Verhältnisse umgeben. Es ist egal, wie viele Leute ihn dabei hören.

Macek exhibits a more optimistic and self-reliant streak than Adam Kindl. Kindl identifies with and emulates Macek: "In einer entpersönlichten Zeit war er immer eine Persönlichkeit geblieben." It is Macek who first intimates, before Adam Kindl himself, that the Karel Kozlík case is no ordinary case but a determining point in his friend's life:

Meinst du....dass man dir kein einziges Mal einen Fall unterjubeln wird, bei dem du deinen Ehrenkodex ad acta legen kannst?....Und hoffentlich geht dir auf, dass dieser Fall schon da ist.17

The similarity between author's and protagonist's names too demonstrates Klima's identification with Adam Kindl. Both names have four and five letters respectively and have almost the same constellation of vowels and consonants.
In an earlier work, *Games*, 1979, the name of the autobiographical figure is Kamil Sova, which falls only two letters short of being an anagram. (Kamil Sova, like Adam Kindl, is a writer and a philosophical seeker of justice who has despaired of trying to change the world and in this case, is made the innocent victim in the game of Execution.)

A Prague reviewer, identified only as I.K., of *Der Gnadenrichter*, refers to the protagonist as "this unparadisical Adam". Certainly the name "Adam Kindl" evokes the Biblical Adam. Unlike his predecessor however, this Adam does not live in harmony with his environment, his woman, or himself, and his final fall from grace, suggested with unintentional irony in the German mistranslation of the novel's title, cannot be attributed to a woman's wiles. Both Alena and Alexandra remain on the periphery of Adam's ethical existence. And where the Old Testament Adam is judged by God, in Adam Kindl's dream, the heavens are silent and he is left to judge himself.

Like that other literary investigation of the Law gone awry, Kafka's *The Trial*, *Der Gnadenrichter* explores an absurd State Justice whose main priorities are bureaucratic efficiency and expediency. In *Der Gnadenrichter*, Klima consistently plays off two very different concepts of justice against each other: this state-controlled official justice - "Justice as a system" - and an unrealized, perhaps unrealizable, ideal notion of an Absolute Justice which, if it exists at all, does so somewhere outside of the world of mortal beings. It is the continual tension between these two contradictory concepts of justice that propels the narrative:

...What fascinated Klima, is that justice as a system, knows only extreme positions, and refuses to acknowledge the vast spectrum, for it is in the ambiguity and variety of life that the artist finds his material.20
Like the hope of achieving a perfect authenticity in *Kindheitsmuster*, the notion of an absolute justice functions both as a central thematic focus, and a fervent personal aspiration on the part of the narrator-protagonist. The central paradox of Adam Kindl's life is precisely that while he can find no evidence that it is possible to exercise an impartial justice in the world, he is a judge by profession and must nevertheless continue to judge, and to maintain the pretext that his judgments are valid and necessary, and that they contribute to the good of society. In reality, he is torn with doubts:

> Kann man denn Gerechtigkeit üben in einer Welt, deren Gleichgewicht völlig gestört ist? Was gilt schon ein Leben wenn Millionen getötet werden...?

For Adam Kindl, the question of justice translates, on the personal level, into the question: Is it possible to judge at all? What finally triggers the last step in a long period of growing disillusionment with his profession is Adam Kindl's own "trial by fire" in the form of a testcase - Karel Kozlík - put before him to force him, once and for all, to reveal where his loyalties lie, in the end. He must align himself openly with the higher authorities, or face their wrath, and any number of repercussions, which he knows to be grave.

His work with the case of Karel Kozlík demonstrates that Kindl can no longer judge his own motives, intentions, and behaviour with certainty. Whatever else the future holds, he declines to pass judgment on another human being:

> Vieles von dem, was er getan hatte, erschien ihm allerdings unerklärlich, und er konnte nicht beurteilen, ob es gut oder schlecht gewesen war, richtig oder falsch.

Similarly, he is unable to pronounce a judgment on Karel Kozlík, and resolves
to abdicate his career in the middle of his life, with no idea of what is to follow, in order to retain what integrity remains to him.

The adult narrator in Kindheitsmuster recalls Nelly's frequent confusion of emotions in strategic situations, and reflects:

Wie sollte sie ahnen, dass das Ertragen eines schlechten Gewissens unter den waltenden Verhältnissen eine notwendige Bedingung zur inneren Freiheit war?22

Adam Kindl's final inability to judge, I would suggest, like Nelly's inner conflict and sense of bad faith, give evidence that their consciences have remained intact, despite tremendous external pressure to silence them.

In the literary works of Ivan Klima, every person suffers one or another form of injustice, and it becomes every individual's choice in turn, either to promulgate it within his/her own life, or to attempt to break the vicious self-perpetuating circle: "der Teufelkreis von Mord und Rache."23

In the first of three stories that comprise Machtspiele, 1977, Matthias Leonard, jury member, faces the ethical dilemma of either sanctioning an execution that has already been carried out, thereby ensuring the continued security of his present life, or of speaking his true opinion and preserving his integrity, thereby endangering the welfare of his entire family as well as his own. Here, as in Klima's play, "The Jury", an earlier version of the same story, the question is not: Was the defendant truly guilty? - but rather: "Will the jury perform its task as puppets of an authority that has made up its mind?" Or, as the young medical student asks Matthias: "Könnte es nicht sein, dass die Zeugen schuldig sind und der Angeklagte nicht?"24

Painstakingly, Matthias Leonard makes his decision, only to learn that in expressing a dissenting view, he too has served unwittingly as the missing spoke in the wheel of official justice: "...dass eben dadurch der trügerische
Eindruck von einem unparteiischen Gericht enstand." His agonizing moral decision has provided the entire proceedings with the appearance of authenticity. Similarly, in Der Gnadenrichter, the matter of Karel Kozlík's guilt or innocence is far less urgent than the question whether and how the autonomy of individual conscience can be preserved in spite of the enormous pressure exerted on the individual, to abdicate his moral responsibility to the State.

Adam Kindl knows that the Karel Kozlík case is not another "normal case"; that if he does not pronounce the judgment expected of him, his professional days are numbered. The actual reason why the State has decided that Kozlík must be found guilty is not made clear nor does it strike the reader as important. Significant is that Kindl is not permitted to act as an independent judge, but as a mouthpiece of the State's decision.

It is ironic that a novel concerned with the question of justice ultimately posits an absence rather than an answer; the absence of anything remotely resembling justice in that society. Curiously, Der Gnadenrichter is in fact, a novel about varieties of unfreedom and the impossibility of judging. Adam Kindl finds himself unable to determine guilt or innocence in the case of Karel Kozlík. Yet the State allows him neither the possibility of (personal) uncertainty nor of clemency towards the defendant: therefore, Kindl is not free to judge. The inner freedom which is his sole comfort under the prevailing conditions is made impossible. The central concerns of the novel can be defined best in negative terms.

Essential to Klima's concept of how the machinery of official justice functions, is the idea of roles - that there will always be those designated as "the guilty" and "the innocent" and that the division between them is arbitrary. The notion appears repeatedly in his writings that the roles could just as easily be reversed and that in history, this is precisely what happens:
In the introduction to her book, *Metaphors of Evil*, Hamida Bosmajian suggests: "In one way or another, all the literary works which I will discuss in this study have at the core a failure of love." She subsequently quotes Theodor Adorno, (*Erziehung nach Auschwitz*):

> ...every person today, without exception, feels not sufficiently loved because no one can love enough. The incapacity for an empathetic identification was unquestionably the most important psychological reason that made it possible for Auschwitz to occur among relatively proper and harmless human beings.

Bosmajian concludes that: "The refusal to love, motivated by the failure to receive love, is the vicious circle that defines the ground of deprivation in the literature written in the shadow of Naziism."  

Although Bosmajian restricts her discussion to the work of German-language writers and does not include Wolf's *Kindheitsmuster*, she could easily have discussed both *Kindheitsmuster* and *Der Gnadenrichter* in relation to her thesis. Both novels reveal a dearth of loving relationships.

Nelly, in *Kindheitsmuster*, senses love only in rare and fleeting moments, and it is generally as a curious, elusive lack. The narrator recalls a family photograph taken by a friend, not long after Charlotte Jordan's mysterious miscarriage:

> Was man nicht sehen kann - Nelly lacht auf dem Bild -, ist eine Art Auszehrung, die rapide schnell um sich greift, und auf die Nelly, die sich nicht erklären kann, mit Anfallen von Schwermut antwortet. Es will ihr nicht gelingen, die Beschädigung der Fingernagelränder einzustellen. Musst du dir denn selber weh tun, Kind!, aber sie kann es nicht
lassen, obwohl sie fühlt, dass sie etwas Verwerfliches tut....Sie kann es körperlich spüren, wie ihre Achtung von sich selbst weiter schwindet....Lieblosigkeit ist ein schauerliches Geheimnis.

The expression of love in times when one's survival is at stake, is considered by those around Nelly as a luxury not to be indulged in. The narrator comments in the Horst Binder episode: "Nirgendwo wird so abgrundtief geschwiegen wie in deutschen Familien." – and one suspects that the presence or absence of love, as well as of knowledge, were left unacknowledged and unspoken. Concerning the lifelong dispute between Charlotte Jordan and Lisbeth Radde, the narrator comments:

(Erst als Charlotte im Sterben lag, brach ein Strom verzweifelter Schwesterliege aus Liesbeth Radde, die keiner ihr nun glauben wollte ausser dir: Durch des Tod der einen Schwester war der Kampf entschieden, die andere konnte endlich lieben.)

In Der Gnadenrichter, everyone from Adam Kindl to Karel Kozlík experiences "the refusal to love, motivated by the failure to receive love." The traumatic years at Theresienstadt leave Adam with the determination: "Mein Herz an niemanden und nichts mehr zu hängen, wo alle und alles nur zur Vernichtung verurteilt ist." Upon the unforewarned departure of his friend Mirek, to the West, Adam stifles his pain at the loss of his friend, and decides:

...nicht mehr an ihn zu denken, mich wie ein Mann zu verhalten. Darunter verstand ich, hart zu sein – vor allem mir selbst gegenüber: Nie mehr grossen Emotionen erliegen, nie mehr jemandem rückhaltlos vertrauen.

Adam Kindl himself is not sure whether the word "love" applies to his feelings for the women in his life. With Magdalena, he remembers having thought once in the distant past, that he loved her: "Er fand es sonderbar,
dass er diese Frau einmal geliebt, dass er diesen Körper begehrt und liebkost..."

Magdalena reflects on their earlier relationship and informs Adam: "Mir war es klar, dass du mich nicht solieben kannst wie ich dich. Es war vielleicht gar nicht deine Schuld, dass du dazu unfähig warst....Man hat dir zuviel angetan, als du klein warst." Later, she adds in a letter to Adam:

Du wolltest geliebt werden. Du wolltest auch lieben, aber keine Konsequenzen darausziehen. Vor allem hast Du Dich nicht verpflichtet oder wenigstens veranlasst gefühlt, auf den Partner einzugehen.

Adam's wife Alena asks for reassurance that he loves her and he cannot answer: "Er wusste nicht ob er seine Frau liebte." Alena longs for "wirkliche Liebe" which she does not find with Adam, and subsequently searches for it in a kibbutz life style and in religion: "Auch ihr fehlte die Liebe. Immer hatte sie Liebe ersehnt und bestenfalls Sex gefunden."

As Alena longs for a word of love from Adam, he in turn desires it from Alexandra: "Wenn sie mir wenigstens ein liebes Wort gönnen würde! Ein zärtliches. Ein menschliches. Einen Hoffnungsschimmer, dass sie doch mit mir empfindet." One suspects, along with the Prague reviewer, I.K., that it is Alexandra's otherness, her total difference from himself, that fascinate Adam Kindl and maintain his desire for her, even after he has acknowledged he does not love her.

While travelling in England, Adam reflects upon his youthful dreams of heroism and worldwide recognition:

Ich glaube nicht, dass ich ruhmsüchtig war, ich sehnte mich nach dem Interesse anderer Menschen, nach Liebe, nach Unabhängigkeit...nach einem nächsten, der mich lieben würde und den ich lieben könnte...Statt dessen wurde ich immer einsamer und verkrampfte mich immer mehr.
The effects of the lack of love are most graphically evident in the life of Karel Kozlík, whose deprivation was the most severe. Considered by his mother at the time of his birth, as something that was done to her, she disposed of him as rapidly as possible like an unwanted pet, and he is handed on whenever he becomes an inconvenience. He is disclaimed by everyone, with the possible exception of his girlfriend, Libuse Kornerova, at the end of his life. His own mother has no objection to her son's impending execution: "Wenn er die Alte umgebracht hat, dann sollen sie ihn hängen, er verdient's nicht besser."30

The function of the "Träume und Alpträume" passages in Der Gnadenrichter remains somewhat unclear in spite of Klima's remarks in the introductory letter to his reader, in which he speaks of: "...hochfliegenden Träumen (die sich größtenteils zwar auf der Ebene nächtlicher Phantastereien und Angste/TRAUME UND ALPTRAUME/ halten, teilweise aber auch seine frühere Handlungsweise beeinflusst haben...)"31 Klima suggests that these dreams are one way in which Adam Kindl arrives at a sense of humility and reconciliation with the world.

As a general comment, I would suggest that these passages are too realistically drawn to be understood as actual dreams and that their "meaning" functions at a realistic rather than a symbolic level. The inner logic of the dreams passages is identical to that of Kindl's waking world, and they are coherent, chronological, and sequential. The final effect is that of a moral fable rather than an actual dream.32

As in Klima's division of Kindl's story into past and present, the passages entitled TRAUME UND ALPTRAUME and DOKUMENTE, strategically spliced into the main narrative in alternate chapters, work together to form a literary mosaic that sets individual human aspiration against historical realities.
Similarly to the memory passages - "Bevor wir aus dem Fluss Lethe trinken" - Adam's dreams cover a period of approximately thirty years, but not the same thirty years. They take him from early adulthood to the age of perhaps sixty years. They posit a variety of ways in which Adam Kindl would like to effect some positive change in the world, and also a progression of means by which he might achieve this. The DOKUMENTE passages counter these ideals with indisputable historical evidence, from the words of Moses in the Old Testament, to the words of Hannah Arendt, analyzing our own times, that in reality, arbitrariness and injustice win out over heroic ideals and conduct. The implicit suggestion is that this will continue to be the case. As Alice informs Kindl: "...Helden seien nicht gefragt. Heutzutage werden Leute bevorzugs, die sich vernunftig und gemassigt verhalten."33

Klima's use of the heading - TRAUME UND ALPTRAUME - is perhaps illuminated by his discussion "Aus der Werkstatt" - an epilogue to the story, Hopfenente. Here he discusses the actual dream that prompted the novella, and suggests the interchangeably nightmarish quality of dream and waking reality. He is fascinated by, "die Traumhaftigkeit vieler Ereignisse unseres Lebens."

Ich schrecke mitten in der Nacht aus einem Traum hoch, und schon kommt mir etwas durh und durch Reales in den Sinn, was mir jedoch wegen seiner Monstrosität alptraumhaft vorkommt....Traum und Wirklichkeit gehen ineinander über....

Actions which are impossible in everyday life are realized in dreams: "Bei Tage wagt es sich natürlich nicht hervor, aber nachts gelingt es ihm mitunter, meiner Aufsicht zu entkommen und mir anschaulich vorzuführen, wie ich mich verhalten sollte."34

The first passage of TRAUME UND ALPTRAUME contains a great deal of Christ-imagery yet is, in one sense, an ironic anti-Christian allegory. It
begins with the extremely Christian notion of forsaking Heaven (fame and fortune as a football hero) to come to earth, (darkest Africa) in order to feed the hungry and heal the sick. The "dreamed Adam" has a newspaper clipping that testifies to his benevolence: "Kindl geht nach Schwarzafrica, um auf Schweitzers Spuren seine Kräfte in den Dienst der Menschheit zu stellen."
The young hero has decided that fame, fortune, and women, cannot be considerations for someone with a mission in life: "Seine bisherige Lebensweise war eigentlich nur eine Vorbereitung auf die Zukunft gewesen, auf das, was er künftig vollbringen musste, wenn sein Leben nicht ungenutzt verstreichen sollte."

At the age of thirty, he travels to Africa despite the warnings and discouragement of his friends, and proceeds to heal the sick, treat epidemics, spread the gospel of modern hygiene, and begin the planning of his "Stadt der Liebe" as well as bring a kingdom of love and harmony to the natives. He singlehandedly engineers a miraculous rescue of his future wife, Elisabeth from a fire-breathing volcano, and tells her: "Ich bin gekommen um Sie nicht allein zu lassen."

As divine compensation for his selflessness, he inadvertently stumbles into material wealth in the form of a diamond mine: "Nun gehörte auch Adam, der nichts dergleichen ersehnt hatte, zu den reichsten Männern der Erde."
Nevertheless he travels to India to solve the famine, works on a cure for cancer, discovers a way to harness solar energy, is awarded a Nobel Prize, begets two sons, and predicts: "die baldige Überwindung von Alter und Tod."

The envisioned and subsequently realized "Stadt der Liebe", completed for his thirty-fifth birthday, is paradisal and reminiscent of St. John's description of Heaven in the Book of Revelations. All that remains for Kindl is, "ein Heilmittel gegen das Altern zu entdecken." the earthly working out of eternal life.
Kindl's zealous activity however, brings on a collapse, and while recuperating, he is forced to slow down. The realization comes to him that: "Die Welt war zu vielfältig, erfasst zu werden, die Menschheit so zahlreich, dass es unmöglich war, alles für sie zu tun, was sie benötigte." It becomes clear to him that far from initiating an era of harmony and brotherly love, his dream will not outlive himself: "Alles löst sich im Meer der Zeit auf, alle gehen in der Menge der immer neu hinzukommenden Menschen unter."

Destroyed by the volcano he would be dust returned to dust: "Er würde zum Himmel aufsteigen wie eine feurige Wolke": but not as Christ ascending into Heaven. As he unwittingly foresees his own death, he beseeches Heaven, but he receives no reassurance from - "dem fremden Himmel...nach wie vor gleichgültig gegenüber allen menschlichen Höhenflügen, Abstürzen, Träumen und Alpträumen. He foresees three days of silent mourning after which he does not rise from the dead, life resumes as normal, and his memory passes into oblivion.

The final effect of this passage is one of self-ironization. It provides a mocking comment on the fate of those who, like Adam Kindl, envision themselves as Saviour of a world that does not want to be, and perhaps cannot be, saved.

In the dreams that follow, Kindl's humanitarian notions take on more specific, more feasible, and increasingly secular proportions, as he heads the revolutionary council in London - "der Liebling des Volkes" - then imagines himself and Matej leading their stalwart force of ninety men against the police in Prague, in order to abolish the security department and establish a new government. \[36\] The situation they cope with here is much more real.

Finally in the last dream, in the penultimate chapter of the novel, only Alpträume remain. Adam Kindl is alone, secluded on his little patch of
land and living in constant dread that even that will be taken away from him. He holds himself responsible for his son's and daughter's difficulties in securing a position. In this grim anticipation of old age, the supremacy of the Police has been openly acknowledged and they have risen to elite status, and live entirely apart from the rest of the population.

That the old man's suspicions of his own impending extermination are not groundless or unrealistic, is implied by his son's inadvertent confirmation thereof. The son responds that even in the event that these fears should be valid, the process would not be carried out as Adam imagines. We know, of course, (even from Kindheitsmuster) that far from being a product of a senile imagination, programs of just this order were carried out during Adam Kindl's lifetime, by Hitler, in Nazi Germany.

It is significant that the dreams shrink the dimensions of Adam Kindl's ambitions, so that the same man who set out confidently to save the world with his discovery of a formula against old age discovers in the final episode, that he cannot even save himself. Where he once concerned himself with universal matters, he is now caught up in anxiety about how he will manage to feed himself. The final implication that he is to be exterminated in the State euthanasia program suggests that Adam Kindl is himself sentenced to death - perhaps for his failure to realize his great aspirations. If as he reflects earlier: "Jeder Mensch...verurteilt jemandem zum Tode," - one suspects that in his dreams, Adam Kindl has pronounced his own death sentence.

The irony that characterized the first passage of TRÄUME UND ALPTRÄUME and that is present to a lesser degree in the two that follow, is absent in the last passage. The situation here is depicted with a frightening sense of realism and reality, to the extent that one could almost confuse it with the central narrative, were it not for the significant difference in Kindl's age.
As the vision of a Utopian Humanistic Socialism fades, the dark face of political reality surfaces, and quite literally, as Klima suggests in Hopfenrente: "Traum und Wirklichkeit gehen ineinander über." 37

Although Der Gnadenrichter purports to be the story of a man who is by profession, a judge, the course of Adam Kindl's professional career is left hazy and unexplored. In this regard I agree with I.K. (the Prague reviewer) who notes the amazing lack of detail concerning the trials which Adam Kindl has presumably conducted, and the sentences he has passed. 38 The only accounts of sentences and executions are those listed in the "Altstädtter Ring" passages, where the author lists dozens of death-sentences pronounced in the historical past, and the various modes of execution in which they were carried out.

We are told of one case — "mein erster 'grosser Fall'" — that of Herr Hzabolčík, which is deemed "politisch sehr wichtig" by the authorities and is also Adam Kindl's first important testcase. It prompts a crisis of conscience for Kindl but after a sleepless night of battling against his convictions, he survives the critical moment. The question — "Wie sollte ich mein: Schuldig! aussprechen?" is answered with the fact that: "Ich war auch der Partei verantwortlich."

Ich verurteilte Herrn Szabolčík zu dreieinhalb Jahren Gefängnis und weiss nicht, was ich anderes zu meiner Rechtfertigung vorbringen könnte als die Tatsache, dass ich in einem Vakuum, in der Unklammerung, im festen Würgegriff einer Logik von Folgerungen lebte, deren Prämissen längst niemand mehr überprüfte, die aber als gültig und unerschütterlich galten.... 39

Here, Adam Kindl admits that he did not seek justice but followed an established pattern instead; that he did not question — but accepted passively.

The present time in Der Gnadenrichter marks another crisis point in the professional and ethical life of Adam Kindl. But while the first crisis
concerned a matter of a few years in the defendant's life, here it has become a matter of life and death; literally, for Karel Kozlík, and spiritually, for Adam Kindl.

Formally it is Karel Kozlík who is on trial in Der Gnadenrichter. In reality his trial is not the main concern. The real trial conducted in the novel is that of Adam Kindl. Perhaps one might say rather, that several trials are conducted in the lengthy course of Der Gnadenrichter.

Officially, Kindl is in charge of the trial of Karel Kozlík, accused of murdering two women; Frau Obensdorfova and her young granddaughter. But the underlying situation is similar to that in Klima's Machtspiele, where:

...the accused is of minor importance, it is the jury who is on trial here - a group of ordinary people faced with the choice between making a decision to the best of their conscience and putting a stamp of approval on a case that has already been decided.

The trial of Karel Kozlík runs counterpoint to the unofficial trial of Adam Kindl, State Judge, who is given a test case by the authorities. He is tried also in order to determine the moral authenticity of his life, by the narrator of the third person passages; and by the reader, who decides how credible and insightful Adam's account of his life is, and what is to be made, finally, of this life.

Although Adam Kindl, in a moment of bitterness, doubts the value of a single life in the face of thousands of murdered innocents, perhaps it is ultimately in the individual life alone that significant change can and must occur. In keeping with the other negative definitions which delineate the protagonist's predominant concerns, Kindl effects a form of justice in the very decision to step down from his profession and whatever slim comfort and security it pro-
vides; indicating thereby that wherever his personal loyalties may lie, it is not with a State-authorized concept and practice of Law and Justice.
FOOTNOTES

1 Klima, Der Gnadenrichter, p. 664.

2 Ibid., pp. 35, 428, 422, 108.

3 Ibid., pp. 7, 8.

4 Ibid., pp. 93, 21, 125, 126.

5 Ibid., pp. 625, 667, 671.

6 Ibid., p. Wolf's narrator similarly determines to leave blank the gaps in her memory: "Doch bleibt es dabei, dass Erfindungen ausscheiden und die Erinnerung und Erinnerungen, die Erinnerung an Phantasien nur als Informationen aus zweiter Hand verwendet werden können, als Spiegelungen, nicht als Realität."

7 Ibid., p. 108.

8 Merivale, pp. 6, 7.

9 Klima, Der Gnadenrichter, pp. 624, 625.

10 Letters to Mr. Spiess, 1970.

11 Lederer, pp. 113, 114.

12 Klima, Der Gnadenrichter, pp. 9, 112, 13, 425.


14 Klima, Der Gnadenrichter, pp. 184, 504, 224.


17 Klima, Der Gnadenrichter, pp. 97, 97, 281.
This is reminiscent of course, of Nachdenken über Christa T. in which both the anonymous narrator and the protagonist, Christa T., are obviously autobiographical.

Christa Wolf also makes significant use of Biblical symbolism and figures. In one of the narrator's frequent dreams in Kindheitsmuster, she writes a postcard to H., her husband, with the message: "Lieber H., hast du geschrieben, jetzt bin ich nicht mehr der alte Adam, sondern ein neuer. Jetzt ist alles von mir abgefallen. Dein alter Adam." (p. 447).


Klima, Der Gnadenrichter, pp. 361, 670.

Wolf, Kindheitsmuster, p. 268.

Klima, Der Gnadenrichter, p. 515.

Goetz-Stankiewicz, p. 129.

Ivan Klima, Machtspiele, trans A. und G. Baumrucker, (Luzern: Reich Verlag, 1977), pp. 9, 67, 68.

Klima, Der Gnadenrichter, pp. 336, 337.

Bosmajian, P. 9.

Wolf, Kindheitsmuster, pp. 294, 242, 349.

Klima, Der Gnadenrichter, pp. 49, 191; Wolf's narrator discusses the effects of denying oneself the experience of certain emotions:

...Wie sie, indem sie selbst sich scheinbar zurückziehen, benachbarte Empfindungen mit sich nehmen. Nun verbietet sich schon nicht mehr nur die Trauer, das Weh - auch Bedauern ist nicht mehr zugelassen und, vor allem, die Erinnerung....Die Axt an der Wurzel. (Kindheitsmuster, p. 321).


Ibid., p. 6.
This is in contrast to the dreams of Wolf's narrator, which are not as much projections of lofty aspirations as symbolically rendered expressions of anxiety and transmutations of guilt and sorrow over her past as she stirs memory and new things come to consciousness.

Klima, *Der Gnadenrichter*, p. 428.


Klima, *Der Gnadenrichter*, pp. 77, 83, 84, 85; The theme of discovering a remedy against old age surfaces repeatedly in Klima's fiction, notably in *Ein Liebessommer*, where David Krempa, a biologist, engages in research that will reveal the secrets of the aging process and allow him to prevent it.

Klima, *Der Gnadenrichter*, pp. 85, 86, 87, 270,


Klima (the author) may have preferred for a variety of reasons, to keep the novel general and applicable abroad rather than localized. Avoiding mention of specific known cases might also be a decision based on political circumspection, on his part.

Klima, *Der Gnadenrichter*, pp. 380, 381, 382.

Goetz-Stankiewicz, p. 129.
How am I to live in this country,  
Where the foot constantly touches  
The unburied bones of the close ones?  
I hear the voices, see laughters. I am unable  
To write anything, as five hands  
Reach for my pen at once  
And order me to write their story,  
The story of their life and death.  
Is it possible that I have been born  
To become a mournful wailer?  
I want to sing joyful feasts,  
Happy groves to which Shakespeare  
led me once. Please give  
The poets a moment of joy  
Or our world will perish.

It is madness to live so, without a smile  
And repeat two words  
Meant for you who are dead,  
For you whose share  
Was to be joy  
Of deeds, thoughts and bodies, of song  
and feast,  
Two rescued words:  
Truth and justice.

("In Warsaw")  
Czesław Miłosz
CHAPTER THREE

Aspiration, Memory, and Obstruction

in Kindheitsmuster and Der Gnadenrichter

The narrator/protagonists of Kindheitsmuster and Der Gnadenrichter embark on a spiritual journey towards an envisioned but uncertain goal - by route of a simultaneous journey into the past. They encounter obstacles and detours that impede their progress and threaten to disrupt the journey entirely.

The final goal of the narrator/protagonists as writers is, through the process of "writing-themselves-free", to arrive at a vindication of their selves and an apologia for their lives. The narrators as human beings and as survivors seek in both instances, a stronger and more realistic sense of identity.

Wolf's narrator speaks of a greater potential for opening up the future, made possible by a clearing of the past:

Im Zeitalter universalen Erinnerungsverlustes...haben wir zu realisieren, dass volle geistesgegenwart nur auf dem Boden einer lebendigen Vergangenheit möglich ist. Je tiefer unsere Erinnerung geht, um so freier wird der Raum für das, dem alle unsere Hoffnung gilt: der Zukunft.

Both narrators aspire towards the realization, in language and in life, of an Ideal. Wolf's narrator seeks an absolute truthfulness (Aufrichtigkeit)
that would exist behind the filter of human consciousness and not be bound by
the limits of that reality which the writer has access to: "eine vielfach ge-
bundene Wahrheit: an sich selbst gebunden, den Mitteilenden, und den immer
begrenzten Freiheitsraum; den er sich abgezwungen hat; gebunden an den, über
den er aussagt, und nicht zuletzt an jene, denen die Mitteilung gilt."²

Klima's Adam Kindl seeks an absolute justice. Impressed as a young
man by the attempt of the Law; "das ganze Leben zu erfassen und ihm ein System
und Normen aufzuzwingen"; he has since despaired of finding justice (Gerechtig-
keit) in the world.³ His ideal is perhaps more illusive than the notion of
Truth that Wolf's narrator sustains, because it is expounded only in negative
terms, in Kindl's bitter commentary about its absence.

The desire to realize these ideals, both in writing and in living, and
the knowledge that this is impossible, create a constant tension in both narra-
tives. In Kindheitsmuster this tension is present throughout and in Der
Gnadenrichter, more in the account of Kindl's earlier years than in his present
life, I would suggest.

In Kindheitsmuster, the severity of the struggle eventually causes the
physical collapse of the narrator and she ends up in the hospital: "Erschöpfen
von ausschöpfen? Die schwere Versuchung, abzubrechen." She is torn by: "die
Notwendigkeit, sich auszuliefern, und die Unmöglichkeit, es zu tun"; but per-
sists in the effort, nevertheless.⁴

Kindl's aspirations to discover and effect a system of law based on jus-
tice, extremely nebulous from the beginning, dissipate further with the passing
years. Although he has vague notions of a "Stadt der Liebe" as a place where
people can live in harmony with each other, he lacks from the beginning, a
precise definition of what it is he hopes to achieve. Lofty dreams of
saving the world testify to his benevolent and youthfully exaggerated
aspirations, but not to any evidence of political perceptions, philosophical convictions, or even of careful thought. Although he determines repeatedly to set things straight and to make his mark on the world, he is always slow to follow through with practical action. His ambitions are great, but the opportunities to carry them out, small, and diminishing through the years. His energy too, is drained by despair, and finally by apathy.

In his middle-aged years, one finds resignation in the place of his earlier hopes, and considerable bitterness in the memory of his former idealism. Upon visiting his father in prison, accused of having libellous attitudes, the young Adam Kindl reflects with passion and bitterness:

Das ist also die Gerechtigkeit...wenn der eine, zwischen zwei Bewaffneten, nicht einmal seinen Sohn ansehen darf, das ist Gerechtigkeit, der eine wird angeklagt, der andere ist Richter, der dritte der Bewacher, warum? Man könnte die Rollen jederzeit vertauschen.

His father has lost all hope of a just rule, which he sustained during the years immediately after the War. He tells him quietly; "Adam, das alles ist nur Lüge und Betrug. Lüge und Betrug."

Wolf's narrator suggests with regard to the process of writing:

Im Idealfall sollten die Strukturen des Erlebens sich mit den Strukturen des Erzählens decken. Dies wäre, was angestrebt wird: phantastische Genauigkeit. (my emphasis)

Her narrative goal of "fantastic accuracy" is expressed in the joint enterprise of living and writing as "Aufrichtigkeit"; which is rendered by the translators both as honesty and as authenticity, which, I believe, is closer to Wolf's sense of the word.

The narrator in Kindheitsmuster lies awake at night and envisions the
possibility of achieving this authenticity:

Du stellst dir vor: Aufrichtigkeit nicht als ein maliger Kraftakt, sondern als Ziel, als Prozess mit Möglichkeiten der Annäherung, in kleinen Schritten, die auf einen noch unbekannten Boden führen, von dem aus auf neue, heute noch unvorstellbare Weise wieder leichter und freier zu reden wäre, offen und mächtern über das, was ist; also auch über das, was war...("Was du noch hoffen kannst, / das wird doch stets geboren.")

In the clear light of morning, however a very different view occupies her thought:

Heute weisst du, dass es im Zeitalter des Argwohns das aufrichtige Wort nicht gibt, weil der aufrichtige Sprecher auf den angewiesen ist, der aufrichtig zuhören wollte, und weil dem, dem lange das verzerrte Echo seiner Worte zurückschlägt, die Aufrichtigkeit vergeht. Dagegen kann er nichts machen....So können wir nicht mehr genau sagen, was wir erfahren haben.6

The narrator is continually torn between her glowing, if rationally anchored vision of the possibilities of truthfulness and the wry knowledge that the vision is utopian and cannot be achieved. This tension nevertheless creates a powerful impetus for ever-greater effort by the narrator, and promotes a renewed determination to persist in her efforts to "overcome herself and find out the truth". (The struggle also gives the narrative its great vitality and power.)

Her refusal to abdicate the quest for a more precise form of truth parallels the narrator's unfailing faith in human potentiality and her desire to see "die Banalität des Guten als gesellschaftliche Realität."7 Alongside the sadness over her observation that people do not seem to learn from past mistakes, evils, and suffering, there is always hope and the conviction that change for the better is possible. She never expresses pessimism, resignation,
or despair, but engages actively in life: in suffering, when it is prerequisite, and in recovery from suffering, both physical and emotional, which inevitably restores a deep innate joy of life.

During her visit to Landsberg, now Grozow Wielkopolski, in 1971, the narrator and Lenka, her daughter, visit the graveyard where Nelly's great-grandmother, Caroline Meyer, lies buried. Only later does she understand her sorrow at the sight of broken tombstones in the old German cemetery:

> Jetzt siehst du den Grund für Bestürzung und Trauer. Sie galt nicht diesen Toten, die deutsche Namen getragen hatten, sondern jenen Lebenden, Überlebenden, die hergehen mussten, die Steine zu schleifen, die Gräber niederzutrampeln, weil ein Hass wie der, der ihnen entfacht worden war, nicht eingrenzen, nicht vor Gräbern anzuhalten ist.

The grief however is followed immediately by the recognition of a critical change in her own response; the discovery of an empathy and compassion, which has likely taken years to develop:

> Gefühle, die sich jetzt frei und ungezwungen auf der Seite der einstmal "anderen" bewegen und um ihretwillen bestürzt sind, wenn sie sich Gewalt antun müssen.

The possibility for change which she observes in her own attitudes and emotional responses, affirms the narrator's hope that similar change can/could also take place on a larger scale.

Adam Kindl, as a young student of law, is warned against a futile belief in the existence of justice. A greatly-respected teacher of Adam's informs him:

> Die meisten Verbrechen begingen immer diejenigen, die an die Verwirklichung der Gerechtigkeit glaubten und vergessen, dass es im Grunde weder Gerechtigkeit noch Recht gäbe, sondern nur die Macht, die Besetze gebraucht oder missbraucht
The older wiser narrator tries to recall his idealistic expectations of his profession:


In the present time, he reflects upon his power and his responsibility in the Karel Kozlík case, and finds himself unequal to the task before him; not only because the society he lives in is reduced to living without responsibility, but also because as a member of this society, he himself has become unfree and lacks any rights.

Kann man denn Gerechtigkeit üben in einer Welt, deren Gleichgewicht völlig gestört ist?...Wie konnte über das Leben oder die Freiheit eines Menschen er entscheiden, der selbst unfrei und rechtlos war und in einer entrechteten, entmündigten Gesellschaft lebte? Wer sollte da nicht verzweifeln?9

During the period of time covered by the central narrative in Der Gnadenrichter, Adam Kindl is disillusioned, bitter, and has resigned himself to the indefatigable supremacy of time and reality over his ideals, and of power over justice. The tension here is the result as much of the discrepancy between Kindl's avowed aspirations and his often perplexing behaviour, as of any half-hearted efforts towards the attainment of his goal. He no longer holds out much hope or desire of changing the world. Der Gnadenrichter is, in one sense, the story of the gradual loss of one man's hopes, narrated at a time subsequent to the process itself.
Before the almighty powers of the State, Kindl is often tempted to descend into self-pity:

Dann gab ich mich dem Selbstmitleid hin. Ich dachte daran, dass ich bisher nichts von dem verwirklicht hatte, was ich mir einst vorstellte, und wenn ich jetzt stürbe, bliebe von mir keine Spur, keine Erinnerung, nichts ausser einem Stein mit meinem Namen, schon nach wenigen Jahren grasüberwachsen und in die Erde eingesunken.\(^{10}\)

The difficult journey into the past undertaken by both protagonist/narrators is conducted by the route of memory. The account of Wolf's narrator is prompted literally, by a forty-eight hour visit to the place of her childhood, formerly Landsberg.

Christa Wolf states in 1976:

...eine andere Frage ist...ob man in sich selbst mit den Erfahrungen leben soll, die man im Grunde vergessen möchte, ob das einen Grund hat, ob das dazu beiträgt, dass man produktiv bleibt.

Her narrator and Klima's Adam Kindl have in common a conflicting desire to put aside past experience and forget; and to remember with hope of understanding, justifying, and in Wolf's case, of explaining to the next generation, represented here in Lenka, her daughter, who is a kind of catalyst for much of the narrator's self-examination. Wolf states elsewhere:

Die Jüngeren, die stehen natürlich jetzt in uns schon ihren Eltern oder Erziehern gegenüber und sagen: Was war denn eigentlich los, wie war denn das, was habt ihr da eigentlich gesehen, getan und gedacht?\(^{11}\)

This simultaneous need to remember and to forget creates a difficulty for both narrators, and demonstrates the claim of Wolf's narrator, that memory is "ein wiederholter moralischer Akt."\(^{12}\) The socio-political systems in which both live, reinforce and compound this difficulty by requiring the individual
to deny his/her personal sense of the past, in favour of a State-authorized version.

Wolf's narrator in particular, is alternately fascinated and troubled by the varieties, distortions, subterfuges, and "the obvious necessity of memory": "So würden wir uns unaufhaltsam fremd werden ohne unser Gedächtnis an das, was wir getan haben, an das, was uns zugestossen ist. Ohne unser Gedächtnis an uns selbst." The ability to forget in order to survive, is the reverse side of the coin. The anonymous narrator of Nachdenken über Christa T. recalls the years immediately after the War: "Ich wusste, dass man viele Namen und Gesichter in sieben Jahren vergessen kann, wenn man will. Wir waren damals streng mit unseren Erinnerungen."

In Kindheitsmuster, the narrator reiterates this conviction:

"...Die Jahre ohne Gedächtnis, die diesen Angangsjahren folgen werden: Jahre, in denen das Misstrauen gegen die sinnliche Erfahrung um sich greift. Niemals haben Menschen so vieles vergessen wollen, um funktionsfähig zu bleiben, wie die, mit denen wir leben."

Similarly, the young Adam Kindl discovers, during the long years of his internment at Theresienstadt, the necessity of economizing with his memories, as one after the other of his friends are shipped off to extermination camps:


Recalling the misplaced indulgence of his teachers towards him after his release and return to school, Adam asserts that past wrongs cannot be righted:

Unsere begangenen Taten sind unwiderruflich wie die Zeit, die vergangen ist. Wir können höchstens versuchen zu
The desire to forget, evinced here, is nevertheless contradicted by Kindl's resolve to write his biography - "Um mich anzuklagen oder um mich zu verteidigen" - requiring precisely that he engage memory to recall his past life. In the case of the author, Ivan Klima, a seven-hundred page story of personal aspiration, set against a panorama of supra-national proportions, constitutes the record of an age, and a legacy to the next generation, if not, tragically, to the Czechs; one which leaves no doubt about the importance of preserving the past. Despite the partial rejection of memory, Der Gnadenrichter too is an act of remembrance, for both author and protagonist.

The narrator of Kindheitsmuster compares the structures of stories and memories:


Perhaps a significant difference between Kindheitsmuster and Der Gnadenrichter is in the relationship of mutual influence of the structures of memory and narrative.

In Kindheitsmuster, in keeping with Wolf's goal of writing with "fantastic accuracy", the structure of her narrative, including the range of material, expands as her memory expands. The structure is somehow "organic"; arising from the nature of the material itself, rather than being imposed on it. The story of a childhood lived in Nazi Germany comments upon and changes the present for, as the narrator suggests, explicitly, and by refusing to keep the
stories separate from each other; past and present are inseparable.

Christa Wolf replies to the question of why she has not chosen to write about the present, instead of the past: "Gegenwart ist ja nicht nur, was heute passiert...Gegenwart ist alles, was uns treibt, zum Beispiel heute so zu handeln, wie wir es tun." ¹⁹

Wolf and Klima share an urge to get behind the facts of official recorded history, and examine specific personal experience which in fact often results in a kind of microcosmic anti-history in Kindheitsmuster and Der Gnadenrichter. Where historians might strive towards accuracy and finality, Adam Kindl and the adult Nelly attempt to search out a truth which is not to be found in dates or places, but if at all, then in people's intuitions, emotions, attitudes, and in silences. This sub-version of the official version is obviously more conspicuous in the case of Klima, whose rendition of Czech history has totally antagonized those responsible for the Party's account, so that there is a complete ban on his literary work. In his use of newspaper excerpts and official documents, in particular, Klima reveals the arbitrariness of historical events, which official historians aggrandize or discredit, immortalize or obliterate, according to their current purpose. The juxtaposition of mutually-discrediting newspaper accounts to show how ludicrous the official version of national history is, subverts any notion of rational or causal progress in history. History, as recorded by the official experts, has chameleon-like properties.

In Kindheitsmuster, the scope and urgency of the material gathers momentum until the narrator discovers:

Wolf's style has been described as "discontinuous prose". The frequent self-interruptions, fragmentations, internal cross-references, bring it close to the processes of actual thought and memory. It parallels the process of memory, which is associative rather than logical, and comes in flashes, spurts, and glimmers, rather than chronological, articulated, linear stories. Even her decision to weave the various time levels into one narrative, reflects the impossibility of determining what, among one's memories, has had the greatest impact upon one's present existence: "In die Erinnerung drängt sich die Gegenwart ein und der heutige Tag ist schon der letzte Tag der Vergangenheit."

(Similarly, the lack of intention to distinguish among author, narrator, and protagonist, reflects an underlying harmony and integration.)

Where in Kindheitsmuster, the narrator's memory constantly interrupts and becomes a part of the present moment, in Der Gnadenrichter it is relegated into a separate, linear, chronological narrative, appearing in the sections entitled - "Bevor wir aus dem Fluss Lethe trinken" - which recalls Kindl's past from the beginning of his three and a half year stay at Theresienstadt, through twenty-five years in his personal and professional lives, and ending with the Russian occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1968. The binary structure of the novel seems to suggest the possibility of separating the past from the present. It is carefully balanced and measured, with passages of Past and Present narratives in each of the ten chapters. It suggests that distinctions can be made between past and present, memory and active life; between dreams and nightmares and waking reality, aspirations and limitations, convictions and conduct, theory and practice:

The relationship between memory on the one hand, which enable Wolf's narrator to re-enter the years gone by; and fear and guilt on the other, which constantly threaten to block this re-entry and maintain a strict border between what was then and what is now - is complex and many-layered in Kindheitsmuster. Memory is impeded by fear, and simultaneously sets new fear into motion. Fear is present on all levels of the narrative: there is fear experience by Nelly, thirty years earlier; fear reactivated in the present by probing too deeply into "die inneren Schichten"; and fear for the future, in the form of the narrator's daughters, who while not implicated in their mother's past, nevertheless experience shades of a pseudo-existence which the narrator regards as an aftermath of her former refusal to face the past: as "living between echoes; between echoes of echoes." Implicit in the task of remembering is the possibility of exorcising these fears by arriving, at their roots, and trying to understand the mechanism of fear itself.

By way of expressing what she anticipates as the tenor of her undertaking, the Narrator notes, at the end of the first chapter: "Ein Gefühl, das jeden Lebenden ergreift, wenn die Erde unter seinen Füssen sich bewegt: Furcht.

As asked about the experience of writing Kindheitsmuster, Christa Wolf comments:

Es wird Angst frei, von der man gar nicht gewusst hat, dass die noch da ist, und die sich auch auf die Gegenwart bezieht und die man jetzt erst verstehst: Warum man in der Gegenwart vor Dingen Angst hat die im Grunde nicht gefährlich sind.

The fear of memory, and the memory of fear, are compounded by the
uncertainty of what these layers of memory, for many years held in abeyance, will do to one's present self:

In deinem Kopf rennen immer die gleichen Gedanken. Vielleicht, sagst du, ist es die Angst, sich selbst zu zerreißen, wenn man sich von der Rolle lösen muss, die mit einem verwachsen war. - Gibt es eine Alternative? - Nein, sagst du. Und doch ist es eine Wahl. (Soll das Gefühl der Echtheit nur noch durch Angst zu erkaufen sein, die echt ist, keinen Zweifel an sich aufkommen lässt?)

The fear and guilt Wolf's narrator experiences and explores in the process of telling Nelly's story are internal threats, signifying the violation of long-respected taboos. Fear, while tracing a firm path through the narrative of Der Gnadenrichter, is associated largely with the threat of external, rather than internal destruction. Kindl at no time evinces the same sense of risk involved in the examination of his past.

What he does describe is the fear experienced as a child in Theresienstadt, fear on behalf of his friends and the fear of losing them, fear as a young Party member that one wrong move could alter his fate irrevocably, fear of falling into the hands of those above him in the hierarchy of power.

In the present, the omniscient narrator hints at Kindl's fear that he could conceivably sentence Karel Kozlík in order to appease the authorities who are determined to have him sentenced to death. It is a fear that even his inner freedom could ultimately be taken away from him that haunts Adam Kindl throughout.

Klima's and Wolf's narrators both see guilt as the quintessential characteristic of twentieth century post-war human beings. The narrator in Kindheitsmuster suggests: "Es geht wohl über die Kraft eines Menschen, heute leben und nicht mitschuldig zu werden." Christa Wolf herself makes a similar
comment in her essay on Fred Wander in *Lesen und Schreiben*: "Erst an den nächsten Generationen sehen wir, was das Wort "unbelastet" bedeuten kann."^{27}

In *Der Gnadenrichter*, built is largely a moral and a philosophical issue. As surely as through reprehensible action, guilt is incurred through non-action and the failure to speak out against injustice. It is also engendered by the gradual erosion of the individual's integrity through continual compromise. The philosophical aspects of guilt are explored in lengthy speculative digressions in both of the two main narratives, by both author and narrator/protagonist.

Perhaps more than the idea of the psychological intricacies of personal guilt, Klima is concerned with the arbitrary designation of guilt and innocence in his own society, as well as universally, and the impossibility of determining blame and blamelessness: "Und was ist überhaupt Schuld? Ich hatte mein Jurastudium fast beendet, aber ich war meiner Antwort gar nicht sicher." As the lawyer conducting the defence of Adam's father tells him: "Auf Schuld oder Unschuld kommt es heute überhaupt nicht an!"^{28}

Bauer, the zealous exponent of the final deadly round, in Klima's *Games*, says:

> Nobody has a completely clear conscience. My prince used to say that the innocent differ from the guilty only in that their turn hasn't come yet. (But one day there'll be enough interrogators to go around.)^{29}

The narrator in *Kindheitsmuster* sees guilt as the culmination of a series of developments, beginning with the fear of knowing; then the effort not to know, the refusal to admit to oneself what one does know, and finally the complicitous silence that indicates unspoken agreement to ignore what threatens to destroy the equilibrium:
Bloss nicht zuviel Gefühl! Bloss nicht exaltiert werden! Bloss nicht in Tränen ausbrechen, wenn da Leute umgebracht werden auf dem Bildschirm, und bloss nicht das Abendbrot dabei unterbrechen!

The uneasy mixture of knowledge is contained in "no words": "Lösch'en, lösch'en, lösch'en." Or, as she describes that process by which her family treated unwelcome news: "Überhören, übersehen, vernachlässigen, verleugnen, verlernen, verschwitzen, vergessen." With reference to the euthanasia program conducted in 1940 and 1941, the narrator comments retrospectively; "...in Zeiten wie diesen gibt es viele Stufen zwischen Wissen und Nichtwissen." Nelly's family, for instance, read the newspaper discriminately, allowing their minds to absorb only "safe" information. Fiction, advertisements, and entertainment news are acceptable: "Andere Mitteilungen wiederum hatten nichts mit ihnen zu tun."

"Was ich nicht weiss, macht mich nicht heiss": the narrator quotes one of the convenient folksy sayings which surface frequently in her memory of her childhood. The Jordan family had a ready supply of "Sprichworte" for most situations in which there was uncertainty about how one should conduct oneself, or simply, where a word of "wisdom", sanctioned by traditional usage, was needed.

Elsewhere, Christa Wolf expresses some wonderment at the reactions of the two generations to the memory of the War:

Die ältere Generation, die älter ist als ich bin, die diese ganze Frage der Schuld ja im Grunde auf sich hatte beziehen müssen, ist am weitesten ausgewichen, die ist am schwersten zu bewegen, darüber zu reden oder vielleicht auch zu denken .... Unsere Generation, die zu jung war, um im direkten Sinne schuldig zu werden, im Sinne von Handlungen schuldig zu werden, hat die ganze Last dieser Schuld an sich erlebt und erfahren.

Klima's Adam Kindl of course, emerges from the War with a rather different perspective. Having suffered imprisonment at the hands of the Nazis, he is
on the other side of the fence from Wolf's narrator, who realizes perhaps only in retrospect that while the matter was never discussed, they had all known of the existence of concentration camps. Kindl's response to the War, similarly to that of his father and his uncle, is to put it firmly behind him and concentrate all his energies on the development of the new socialist state.

The attempt - "Sich frei zu schreiben" - could also mean to write oneself free of charges, as if one had been put on trial and had now to provide a self-defence, which is precisely what Wolf's and Klima's narrators do. Wolf refers to the task of literature today as "peace-research" in Lesen und Schreiben. Kindheitsmuster and Der Gnadenrichter, I would suggest, are also attempts at defence-research; self-defence, and defence against repetition of past evils in the future.

Wolf's narrator considers the powerful influence of propaganda and the media that concealed the true range of atrocities committed during the War, and notes: "Selbstbezichtigungen und Entschuldigungsversuche halten einander die Waage." ^4

In Kindheitsmuster, Wolf is concerned predominantly with moral and psychological issues, and her narrator's language reflects this interest. Legal terminology where it appears at all, is metaphorical, and intended to evoke the sense of hazy, ill-defined guilt suspended over the narrator, with no implication of an external judicial authority.

I have mentioned before that the standards by which she judges her own life are personal ones; influenced by her life experiences, her maturity, her knowledge of literature and history, and based loosely on Judeo-Christian premises of good and evil. Her ethic might be summarized with the same expression Alexander Stephan has chosen to describe her literary style; that of
"Subjective Authenticity". (Stephan first proposed the term and it was subsequently used by various Wolf critics and is now used freely in the body of Wolf criticism.) Stephan paraphrases Wolf's objective in writing as: "ein Höchstmass an subjektiver Authentizität beim Schreiben, die unauflosbare Verbindung von Biographie und Zeitgenossenschaft."35

Adam Kindl, looking back upon his life, finds: "Vieles von dem was er getan hatte, erschien ihm allerdings unerklärlich, und er konnte nicht beurteilen, ob es gut oder schlecht gewesen war, richtig oder falsch."36

Klima's narrator speaks, as I have suggested, always as a judge. While the psychological component is unmistakeable in the novel, the conceptual framework is above all, legal and philosophical.

To write is also to pass judgment on. Since Ivan Klima and his protagonist, Adam Kindl, both have good reason to doubt the existence of justice in the law courts of Prague, the process of writing Der Richter, for Adam Kindl, as Der Gnadenrichter, for Ivan Klima, might be seen as a trial by pen and paper.

If one believes, as Adam Kindl does, that one is in the world in order to assess values, and pass judgments on them, and the leading powers that be in the land are revealed as morally untrustworthy, the judge who desires to understand his own life will eventually judge himself. Where in the law court, the defendant is charged with a specific office, the charge against Adam Kindl, as against Ivan Klima, is much more difficult to ascertain. Names, places, dates, constitute the indisputable facts of this trial of ethics: everything else is circumstantial and can be interpreted in many different ways.

The charges laid against Kindl by the System concern his refusal to abdicate personal initiative and responsibility to its greater power. Those
laid against Ivan Klima concern his refusal to write a modern form of Socialist
Realism; literature that would pass official censorship. In both instances -
in Klima's fiction and in his life - the "subversive behaviour" is the outcome
of a deep moral struggle. The relationship of author and narrator/protagonist
is reinforced by their mutual commentary. While Klima writes the story of
Kindl the Judge, the "sub-text" of Der Gnadenrichter illuminates in turn, the
plight of Klima the writer. Neither author nor narrator arrives at a verdict.

The narrator in Kindheitsmuster begins her quest with the conviction:

Aber selbst wenn die Hoffnung gering ist, sich allmählich
freizusprechen...so wäre es doch nur diese geringfügige
Hoffnung, die falls sie durchhält, der Verführung zum
Schweigen und Verschweigen trotzen könnte. 37

What measure of self-justification, authenticity, inner freedom, is
attained by the narrator/protagonists of Kindheitsmuster and Der Gnadenrichter?
Is the objective - "Sich frei zu schreiben" - ultimately realized by either?

To my mind there is a significant difference in the extent to which
Wolf's narrator and Klima's Adam Kindl accomplish this goal.

The narrator in Kindheitsmuster has confronted memory and answered
"the voices." She has acknowledged guilt and begun to perceive the borders
between rational and irrational guilt. She has overcome fear by investigating
and even inviting it:

Wie doch die Angst zurück-weicht, wenn man nur anfängt,
daran zu denken. Wie die böse Ahnung, dass es dir bald
die Rede verschlagen wird, sich anflöst und dafür Lust
entsteht.

She has made peace with, and perhaps even discovered a kind of love for the
child Nelly, whom at the outset, she; "loved with the wrong kind of love, and
hated with the wrong kind of hate.\textsuperscript{38} She has survived the journey's obstructions and arrived at a goal.

The freedom that Adam Kindl achieves at the end of Der Gnadenrichter is essentially a negative freedom; an inner aloofness from the mentality prevailing in the context of a totalitarian system; the knowledge that he has had no part in Kozlík's execution and has done his utmost to prevent it; the satisfaction of knowing that the State has not made him its subservient mouthpiece.

Structurally however, the "Träume und Alpträume" passages as well as the two main narratives, end on a note of resigned despair. Adam Kindl, in his final nightmare, awaits his own extermination at the hands of the State he has served all his life. Adam, in the memory passages, having received word that - "Die Russen sind da" feels himself alone: "in der Welt des seelenlosen Stahls und der Macht, die nichts als Vernichtung mit sich bringt....Hinter mir gab es nichts, vor mir gab es nichts, in meinem Kopf war nur ein einziger Gedanke, ein einziger Satz: Das ist zuviel. Das ist zuviel." Adam in the central narrative (Epilog) works with Macek, writes his autobiography, and awaits surgery - no longer fearing, or hopeful of anything. His sense of accomplishment is ambivalent: "Er war umhergeirrt und hatte sich beirren lassen. Er hatte sich selbst getäuscht und andere. Aber er hatte versucht, sich von diesem Zustand zu befreien und die Trugbilder zu durchschauen.\textsuperscript{39}

The omniscient narrator of the "Epilog" suggests: "Zum Schluss hatte er immerhin gelernt, sich selbst zu verstehen." But immediately after, Adam's own unfinished inner speculations throw such claims into doubt: he expresses uncertainty about whether his limited accomplishments are of sufficient merit - "dass er sich von Schuld lossprechen konnte.\textsuperscript{40} He ponders: "War er überhaupt eines echten Gefühls für einen nahestehenden Menschen fähig?" One wonders if
he cannot answer that question what does he actually know about himself?

The three voices in _Der Gnadenrichter_—author's, omniscient narrator's, and protagonist's—never fully distinguished or fully integrated, fall apart at the end of the novel and even, as here, contradict each other. The omniscient narrator offers one evaluation of Adam Kindl's life, the protagonist implies another, and the author himself appears unsure of how to end the novel. One is tempted to speak of "loose ends" at the end of _Der Gnadenrichter_ because the novel lacks the sense of a resolution or an ending. Perhaps this irresolution reflects Klima's sense of his own uncertain and unpromising fate in Czechoslovakia. Like his protagonist, Adam Kindl, Klima does not know what the future may bring and he has no reason to expect improvement in his own situation.

_Kindheitsmuster_ ends on a rather different note. While Wolf's narrator too, is uncertain of how successfully she has accomplished the goal set herself in writing the book, the significance of her future is never in question.

The narrative draws to a close:


Earlier, recovering from exhaustion in the hospital, she had discovered:

_Der Endpunkt wäre erreicht, wenn zeite und dritte Person wieder in der ersten zusammen trafen, mehr noch: zusammenfielen. Wo nicht mehr "du" und "sie"—wo unverhohlen "ich" gesagt werden müsste._

Wolf's narrator like Klima's, ends by reiterating the questions which
prompted the process of telling her story:

Hat das Gedächtnis seine Schuldigkeit getan?...Und die Vergangenheit, die noch Sprachregelungen verfügen, die erste Person in eine zweite und dritte spalten konnte - ist ihre Vormacht gebrochen? Werden die Stimmen sich beruhigen?\footnote{42}

It is the response to her own question that indicates the degree of her accomplishment. It comes in the first person: "Ich weiss es nicht."\footnote{43} The openness and non-conclusiveness of this statement does not diminish its significance. As Ursula Mahlendorf has noted: "Hers is now a self which has been tested in the crucible of an acid self-examination."\footnote{44}

It is followed immediately by a passage of unmistakeable affirmation. At peace that she has done what she could, the narrator gives herself over to dreams and visions, and concludes:

Sicher, beim Erwachen die Welt der festen Körper wieder vorzufinden, werde ich mich der Traumerfahrung überlassen, mich nicht auflehnen gegen die Grenzen des Sagbaren.\footnote{45}

But Kindheitsmuster and Der Gnadenrichter go beyond serving as vehicles for their authors' vindication and self-liberation. In their particular formulation of the stories of individuals seeking to live authentic and meaningful lives in our own times, they embody and reflect the search that is common to us all. In an unpublished paper on Kafka, read in Vancouver, March 1983, Klima notes some of the "signs of the modern world" evident in Kafka's works:

...isolation, the sense of being at the mercy of power and its lackeys, the unquenchable yearning for freedom and at the same time for some kind of absolute in this world in which God has been rendered dubious, a yearning for law and order, the feeling of being constantly and mutually endangered and estranged.\footnote{46}
These words might just as easily be applied to Klima's own literary work, for every single feature listed, contributes to an apt description of Klima's Adam Kindl. By virtue of his experiences during the War, his membership in a society which isolates its members in order to maintain its hold over them, and his personal temperament Kindl too is an outsider of sorts; desiring desperately to participate in a humanistic community in his early years, nevertheless doomed to eternal frustration by the social and political realities of his land, and by the demise of belief in universal values shared by contemporary human beings.

Wolf, in my opinion, goes several steps further. Taking into consideration the given realities of this century, she demonstrates that the individual is not reduced to passive adherence to a code of silence and denial. Perhaps more than in Klima's work, a prophetic element is unmistakeable in her writing. Although Christa Wolf, I believe, would not consider herself as any kind of prophet, the language as well as the moral concerns of the narrator in Kindheitsmuster, contain a strong sense of warning and exhortation.
FOOTNOTES

1 Christa Wolf, as I have suggested previously, actually uses the German term "Sich-frei-schreiben" while Klima refers to the process more obliquely. Wolf explores the many possible permutations of meaning that the term evokes: her narrator frees herself of the tyranny of the past over her present life; examines the extent of her own involvement in the conspiracy of silence, during and after the War; and experiences an emotional catharsis as a result of telling her story.

2 Wolf, Kindheitsmuster, pp. 181, 373, 374.

3 Klima, Der Gnadenrichter, p. 266.

4 Wolf, Kindheitsmuster, p. 437.

5 Klima, Der Gnadenrichter, pp. 336, 338.

6 Wolf, Kindheitsmuster, pp. 317, 437, 438, 420.

7 Wolf, Lesen und Schreiben, p. 145.

8 Wolf, Kindheitsmuster, p. 366.

9 Klima, Der Gnadenrichter, pp. 332, 376, 361.

10 Ibid., p. 401; The plaintive and powerless tone of this passage is evident again as Kindl imagines what would become of his children, should he leave them:

Wenn ihm wirklich nichts anderes übrigblieb, als fortzugehen, würden die Kinder bald vergessen was er ihnen an Erziehung beigebracht hatte. Sie würden ganz anders leben, als er, andere Werte anerkennen und sich andere Ziele setzen. Ob ihnen dadurch soviel entgehen würde? Der Zweifel am Wert des eigenen Beispiels liess ihn verstummen. (p. 410)

Here there is the problem of Adam's credibility. Thus far, he has shown little awareness of his children's existence, nor interest in their development. He has noticed them mainly as interferences in his own life, and this moment of self-questioning neither particularly engages the reader's empathy nor prompts
a change in Kindl's behaviour towards his children.

11 Wolf, in Materialienbuch, p. 42, 41.

12 Wolf, Kindheitsmuster, p. 143.

13 The rewriting of history by State historians, is a theme that recurs frequently in the work of East-bloc writers. Milan Kundera has written frequently about the "air-brushing" of undesirable events and persons out of history most fully perhaps, in his novel, The Book of Laughter and Forgetting, 1981.

14 Wolf, Kindheitsmuster, p. 10.

15 Wolf, Nachdenken über Christa T., p. 25.


17 Klima, Der Gnadenrichter, pp. 49, 125.

18 Wolf, Kindheitsmuster, p. 417.

19 Wolf, in Materialienbuch, p. 34.

20 Wolf, Kindheitsmuster, p. 112.

21 Ibid., p. 9.

22 Klima, Der Gnadenrichter, p. 127.

23 Wolf, Kindheitsmuster, pp. 275, 34.

24 Wolf, in Materialienbuch, p. 42.

25 Wolf, Kindheitsmuster, p. 446.

26 Ibid., p.

27 Wolf, Lesen und Schreiben, p. 188; One wishes perhaps for a German word that would preserve the difference between the way Wolf's and Klima's narrators use the word "Schuld". Klima uses it predominantly in the more objective sense of "fault", or "blame", which may sometimes be apportioned out; and as an appropriate moral and emotional response to certain modes of behaviour. It also carries the meaning of a moral responsibility that has been inadequately carried out.
The text of Kindheitsmuster is sprinkled with proverbs and folk wisdom which create an interesting contrast to the lines Wolf frequently extracts from various literary works, the sources of which often remain anonymous. Russian proverbs, political slogans of the past and present, are counterbalanced by lines from the poetry of Ingeborg Bachmann, the writings of Brecht, Schiller, Frisch, Musil, to name only the few which I identified.

It may be a little far-fetched to suggest that the contrast between various quotations provides an insight into the author's conception of two essentially different ways of responding to the world: the simplified generalizations and catchwords predominantly of her childhood and her NS past, and the often reflective, personal voice that speaks from the lines she quotes from other writers' works. The inclusion of slogans and proverbs illustrates also how a phrase or sentence-formation can initiate a certain way of thinking which far outlasts its original meaning.
This is the only instance where she refers to herself in the first person other than a curious passage in the thirteenth chapter where she lies awake at night, watching the moon, and reflects: "Das merk ich mir. Das sind die Sachen, die man sich merken kann. Das andere vergeht." (p. 320)

Ursula Mahlendorf, "Confronting the Fascist Past and Coming to Terms with it", World Literature Today, 55, 1981.

Wolf, Kindheitsmuster, p. 477.

Klima, "The Swords are Drawing Closer: A Personal Comment on Franz Kafka's Inspiration", trans., in part, by Marketa Goetz-Stankiewicz.

The prophetic element, combined with a study of the language of Kindheitsmuster, is material for another study. It is of vital importance to Wolf, to determine how to speak, what to say and what to leave unspoken.
In Versuch, in der Wahrheit zu leben, his analysis of post-totalitarian forms of government and society, Václav Havel cites the situation of "the common man"; the vegetable seller who places the proscribed placard in his shop window, as an automatic action rather than as a statement of his personal conviction/persuasion. This placard, with a hundred others like it — each significant on its own — combines to create a very specific "Panorama des Alltags" which in turn, reaffirms the importance of the gesture, and ensures the maintenance of "the lie".

Havel analyzes the possibilities open to the vegetable seller who refuses to perpetuate the lie, and suggests that he may resist in the fact — "dass er manche Dinge einfach nicht tut"; or his protest can extend beyond non-action: "Der Gemusehandler kann anfangen, etwas Konkretes zu tun." (His emphasis.)

Alexander Solzhenitsyn states in the course of his Nobel Prize Speech:

...The simple course of the simple brave man is not to participate in the lie and not to support lying actions. But writers and artists are capable of more: they can conquer the lie. (His emphasis.)
Christa Wolf and Ivan Klima share with Havel and Solzhenitsyn, a common political geography and to some extent, a common Central - Eastern European heritage. Wolf and Klima share with Havel the decision to stay and fight the lie from within, while Solzhenitsyn fights it outside of his native Russia.

Solzhenitsyn says also:

...literature can transfer condensed, irrefutable experience - from generation to generation. In this way it becomes the living memory of nations and together with language, it preserves the national soul.³

By confronting the lie that the rise of Nazism in Germany was a unique historical phenomenon and could never recur, and that the past has been overcome, Christa Wolf conquers personal as well as social taboos, and does her part to prevent forgetting or a recurrence of past evils.

In a country where freedom of speech and expression are only a pretext to put pen to paper already comprises a moral act of sorts. To speak the truth on paper where it can be used as evidence against one is perhaps a kind of heroism. That a writer such as Ivan Klima should be prevented from publishing his work, is as Solzhenitsyn says of Akhmatova and Zamyatin, not merely a personal tragedy, but a tragedy for an entire nation. Klima, like Solzhenitsyn for many years, must take heart from the knowledge that outside his own country at least, his work is published and his name is not unknown.

Solzhenitsyn says of "the nation whose literature is interrupted by force", that this is not "simply a violation of 'the freedom of the press'.
it is the incarceration of the nation's heart, the amputation of the nation's memory. The nation can no longer remember itself...."^4

Klima has attempted to remind the nation of itself; through story, metaphor, and dream; with irony, despair, and perhaps, like Miłosz' uncle; "with old love worn out by pity, loneliness and anger."^5

I would like to end this discussion with the hopeful words of Alexander Solzhenitsyn, whose works have long shared the fate of Klima's works — in being published only outside of his homeland:

For in the struggle with the lie, art has always conquered and always will conquer — visibly and irrefutably for all to see.^6
FOOTNOTES

1 Havel, p. 55.

2 Solzhenitsyn, Nobel Prize Speech, in *Index on Censorship*, 1, No. 3, 4, p. 24.


BIBLIOGRAPHY


"The Swords are Drawing Closer: A Personal Comment on Franz Kafka's Inspiration." Unpublished paper written for a Kafka Symposium held at The University of British Columbia, March 1983. Excerpts have been translated by Marketa Goetz-Stankiewicz.

Theaterstücke.


Merivale, Patricia. "The Search for the Other Woman: Female Artist-Parables in the Seventies."


A Czech Awakening." Index on Censorship, 5, 81.


Volkmer, Werner. "Thinking Along Rails: 30 years of East German Censorship." Index on Censorship, Spring 1976.


----------.  "Shall I granish a Metaphor with an Almond Blossom?"  *New German Critique,* Spring, Summer, 1981, 23.


----------.  *Unter den Linden (Drei unwahrscheinliche Geschichten).*  Darmstadt: Luchterhand, 1974.